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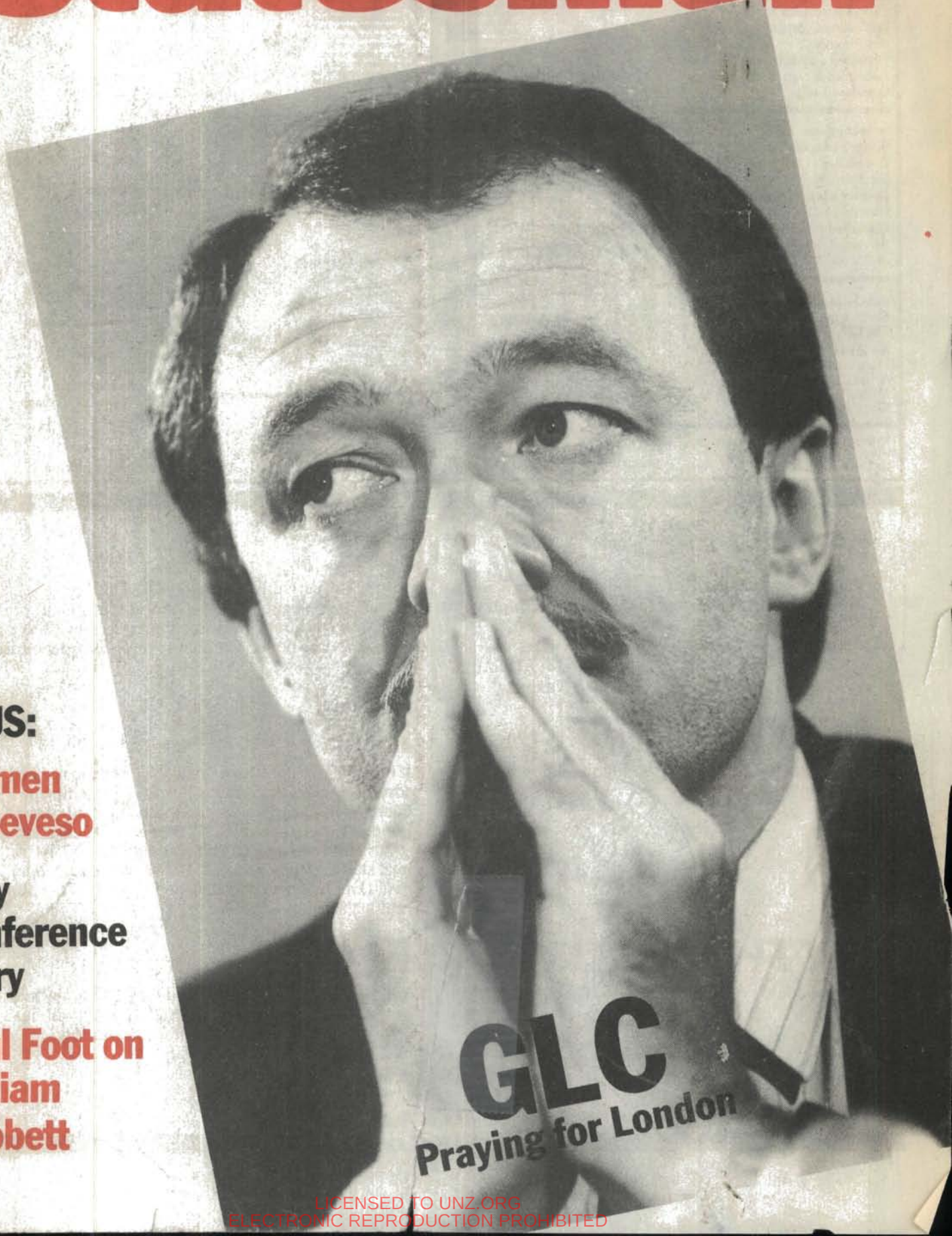

GLC
Praying for London

PLUS:

Women of Seveso

Tory Conference Diary

Paul Foot on William Cobbett

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New Statesman

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Praying for London
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MYTH

"The GLC is a reckless spender, unable to control its own expenditure compared to Central Government."

FACT

"During the period 1978/79 to 1983/84 current expenditure on goods and services administered directly by Central Government increased by 101%. Over the same period GLC gross revenue expenditure increased by 88%."

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MYTH

"Abolishing the GLC will save millions of pounds and cut down bureaucracy."

FACT

"It must be inevitable that it will cost more to run and administer the GLC's many functions by setting up quangos and boards and forcing already hard-pressed London Boroughs to take on even more. GLC administrative and managerial staff amount to only 7½% of total staff and their wage bill is 2% of the GLC's total cost. Over half the GLC staff are fire fighters or public health and safety workers."

MYTH

"London doesn't need the GLC – look at other capital cities."

FACT

"If the GLC were to be abolished then London would be the only capital city in the western world without a democratically elected strategic local authority."

Keep GLC
Working for London

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New Statesman

Vol 106 No 2743 14 October 1983

The politics of sex

THE TORY PARY was in an instant mess over the Parkinson affair because it probed the hypocrisy of both 'traditional' Tory morality and its strident, populist, modern version. It crystallised in the farcical debate about whether Mr Parkinson has made partial amends by continuing to live with his wife, or made matters worse by leaving a pregnant mistress in the lurch. Most ludicrous of all, whether Mrs Thatcher took the view that Mr Parkinson's private life was his own affair, or considered that his private conduct reflected on his public standing, how can it be that what has happened makes him unsuitable to remain as chairman of the Tory Party, but still acceptable as a Secretary of State? The Party, it seems, transcends the State.

Any other political party in this country would take the view that the unhappy private relationships between Mrs Parkinson, Miss Keays and Mr Parkinson were private matters. But for Tories it is not so simple. For the essential Tory view of society is constructed on the model of the patriarchially dominated family. Both Tory morality and Tory social policy are based upon it. For Tories, therefore, it is a matter of *public* policy that *private* lives should be governed by a strict code of family and sexual ethics. The extension of this code to cover all aspects of life – schooling, the workplace, business, broadcasting, the law courts – is the key vehicle for extending Tory dominance to the whole of society.

This Tory social model has always depended on the acceptance by women of their alloted role. (It is striking that the Parkinson affair has been discussed almost exclusively in terms of the role of Mr Parkinson. The women involved are simply assumed to adjust to his position.) The ideal woman in this model brings to her husband support, some sex, children, her unpaid services as wife and mother and – if he is particularly lucky – useful social connections and a dowry.

But this model is a system designed to regulate the lives of wives, children and the 'lower classes'. By convention it is not expected to restrict the activities of people in the position of Mr Parkinson. It is said that the Keays-Parkinson affair was fairly common knowledge in Tory political circles for some time and that such affairs are relatively common. But no one in that male-dominated circle suggested then that he should resign as chairman of the Tory Party. It was only when the affair became *public* knowledge that the code was deemed to have been breached. That is pure hypocrisy.

The puncturing of that public hypocrisy is the main reason for the scarcely concealed delight with which the media has greeted the affair. The political danger to Mrs Thatcher is that it may also have punctured the effect of her populist morality. It was, after all, the *Sun* that has most vigorously demanded Mr Parkinson's resignation. □

Back to the 19th century

OVER THE LAST two decades Tory governments have been responsible for creating a complete mess of local government. The prime motive for creating the Greater London Council was gerrymandering. The Tories wanted a local government for London that they could regularly control, in place of the old London County Council which was steadily Labour. The theory of a clear and sensible distinction of roles between the GLC (responsible for 'strategic' London issues) and local borough councils (responsible for local services) has not worked well. There has been massive and costly duplication of work, for example over roads and planning.

In 1974, despite all the strong arguments to the contrary, Mr Peter Walker imposed his disastrous reorganisation of local government outside London, creating in the process the very Metropolitan Counties that this government is now proposing to abolish. The most charitable estimate is that his wholesale introduction of two-tier local government added 20 per cent of totally pointless cost to local government. It was probably more. Now, having found that their creations are proving uncomfortably effective centres of political resistance, the Tories are proposing to abolish them.

Certainly local government and its finance are in need of reform. We hope that Ken Livingstone and his campaign to save the GLC will not make the mistake of simply digging in to defend the status quo. But what the government is proposing is quite unacceptable. It is in the first place profoundly undemocratic. It would make London the only Western capital city without an elected local government. It would put essential functions in London and elsewhere into the hands of a raft of nominated quangos. In effect it would be putting the clock back a hundred years to the situation before the 1888 County Councils Act, which introduced the principle of unitary local government authorities precisely to end the kind of jumble of unco-ordinated and unelected local bodies that this government is now proposing to reintroduce.

As Tony Travers shows in his article on page 8, what is now being proposed would be a nightmare in practical and financial terms. The government has not even attempted an estimate of the costs and supposed benefits of the proposals. The White Paper explicitly admits that 'it is not possible to put a figure on savings or costs' – which is the most grossly irresponsible way in which to embark on a major change of policy. In fact it is not a policy. It is a political spasm, brought on by the government's failure to find an acceptable alternative to the present rating system – a reform to which Mrs Thatcher has been personally and publicity committed since as long ago as 1974. It must be stopped. □

Next week . . .

● **Professor Maurice Kogan** reviews this government's assault on higher education.

● **Tariq Ali** commends a new Polish study of the feudal court of Haile Selassie.

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Don't say crown say Bovis

THE GOVERNMENT'S Property Services Agency – which was at the centre of last week's row about fraud in the civil service – has broken its own rules, spent an unnecessary £½ million and lost control of the cost of private building contracts, as a direct result of government pressure for privatisation. Senior Department of the Environment officials have ignored legal and other warnings that a new system of contracting, favoured by private industry, will end up costing the taxpayer more.

According to information given to the *New Statesman*, the new system of so-called 'management fee contracting', has been urged on the Department and the PSA by private businessmen appointed to the recently created 'PSA Advisory Board' by former Environment Secretary, Michael Heseltine. The new system is also supported by the PSA's Chief Executive, Mr Montague Alfred, who is himself a private enterprise – he and his wife, trading as MASA (Montague and Sheila Alfred), are paid to run the PSA at a fee substantially greater than the salary of a normal Whitehall Permanent Secretary. The costs to the taxpayer of the new contracting system sought by the PSA's private business advisers are likely to be rather greater than the £660,000 a year which Mr Alfred suggested earlier this year was the likely cost of staff dishonesty inside the Agency.

'Management fee' contractors charge their clients a percentage commission to supervise the construction of a building. Private construction companies, especially Bovis – of which Education Secretary Sir Keith Joseph was formerly the chairman and for 20 years a director – favour the system. But when used for government contracts, the system has many disadvantages for the taxpayer.

- Under management fee contracting, no set cost for the project is agreed in advance. The contractor sub-contracts the work, passing on the cost directly to the state.
- The management fee is charged as a percentage of the whole construction cost.
- A management contractor is not responsible when things go wrong. The PSA has to give the contractor a complete indemnity against any losses resulting from failure by the sub-contractors they hire.
- Management fee contractors claim that their service is better because they provide a full planning and design service. But the PSA – the old Ministry of Works – does not need these services because it can do all this work itself on each building project.

The *New Statesman* has been given details of a recent controversial contract using the new system, for the government's International Conference Centre (ICC), at Broad Sanctuary in Westminster, facing Parliament Square. The prestigious new centre, now under construction, is due to be completed in time for the UK assumption of the EEC Presidency in 1987. In 1981, when the contract was awarded, it was believed that the centre would cost £27 million. Its actual cost is now likely to be over £55 million. The contract was not awarded to the lowest bidder. Instead, it went to Bovis.

For the International Conference Centre (ICC) contract in 1981, six potential contractors were interviewed. The lowest bid from a qualified contractor was put in by Taylor Woodrow Ltd, who said they would charge £1.5 million as a preliminary fee, plus 2.75 per cent of the total contract price. Bovis's prices were respectively £2 million and a commission of 2.95 per cent of the contract. Senior officials knew that using Bovis was costing taxpayers at least £500,000 more at the start. And the more the centre eventually cost to build, the more expensive Bovis's price was, compared to Taylor Woodrow.

A DoE legal specialist who has seen the government contract with Bovis, describes it as 'a hopeless mishmash . . . based on nonsense'. For the reasons given above his department warned the government in the summer of 1981 not to accept Bovis's offer 'without substantial renegotiation'. He said he was: 'Surprised that anyone would seriously consider letting a £55 million contract on the basis of such nonsense.'

The officials who awarded the ICC contract to Bovis believe that they were entitled to be 'subjective' in deciding to whom to make the award. They claim, not surprisingly, that Bovis – who had invented the system – are the 'most experienced' in mangement fee contracting.

But the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, which investigates how public funds are spent, may wish to take an interest in the officials' subjective approach. Mr Joel Barnett, the former chairman of the PAC – who was informed of the controversy within the DoE about management fee contracting before the election – said then that he would be 'very interested' in examining and investigating the ICC contract.

Duncan Campbell

Lady Howe (right) has joined the growing ranks of Tories demanding that the government reprieve the South London Hospital for Women. Below some of the campaigning literature from the Hospital Action Committee

Tory ladies oppose fouler cut

HEALTH SERVICE cutbacks have provoked opposition from leading Conservatives, who are rallying to the defence of the only women's hospital to take in-patients. The campaign to save the South London Hospital for Women is supported by local Tory MP William Shelton, the normally stodgy official Women's National Commission and the daunting National Federation of Women's Institutes.

More embarrassingly, the hospital is being backed by Lady Elspeth Howe, wife of Sir Geoffrey Howe and former deputy chairwoman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, who has written to health minister Kenneth Clarke expressing her support for its work. And Baroness Macleod, widow of Tory minister Ian Macleod, led the debate in the House of Lords at the end of July calling for its retention. Further, Dame Shelagh Roberts, Tory Euro-MP for SW London, has advised the campaigners on how best to petition the European Parliament.

The South London, at Clapham Common, is the last remaining general hospital in the country run entirely by women for women and will have to close down by April next year unless the DHSS comes up with the £5 million a year needed to keep it open. A survey this May showed that almost one-fifth of the hospital's patients came from outside the area.

A campaign to save the hospital as a separately funded national 'centre of excellence' was started when Wandsworth Health Authority took the closure decision – largely as a result of Mr Fowler's earlier budgetary strictures – late in June. Since then several deputations have presented themselves at Downing Street and the DHSS, including one from the authority itself, one from the hospital's senior staff, headed by Streatham MP William Shelton, and one this week from Wandsworth Community Health Council.

The South London is a classic example of the small, well-run popular hospital. It has 192 beds, covering obstetrics, general medical and surgical beds, gynaecology, geriatrics, mental illness, and a special baby care clinic. Outpatient clinics are held in a wide range of specialities, including psychiatry, dermatology and ophthalmology. Preventative health care is provided for in a family planning clinic with psycho-sexual counselling, a smoking clinic, a Well Women clinic, and a breast clinic. The hospital has just bought, with GLC help, a £25,000 laser to treat cervical cancer.

Quentin McDermott

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Alliance lets through Edinburgh road

EDINBURGH'S centre – so far protected from the ravages of the road lobby – could be seriously harmed following this week's decision by Lothian Regional Council to give the go-ahead to a major road development in the city. With the crucial support of the three Alliance councillors, the Tory administration was able to overcome Labour opposition to the controversial £29 million plan to build the Western Relief Road linking the M8 and M9 to the city centre.

The plan has attracted widespread opposition from most community and amenity organisations and from party activists across the political spectrum. Liberal, SDP and Conservative party members in Central Edinburgh are known to be split over the plan, while the Labour party is united in opposing it. There are also differences between the Regional Council and the Conservatives who run Edinburgh District Council who may delay the planning application.

The Alliance, after long dithering over their position, announced on Monday that they would support a single carriageway road and call for a public inquiry. At Tuesday's regional council meeting, however, they first voted in support of the principle of a road (thereby ensuring it was passed) and then lost the vote on a single, as opposed to a dual, carriageway to the Tories, with Labour abstaining. The result was official council approval for a large dual carriageway development which, if built, will disgorge greatly increased amounts of traffic into the city centre.

The only part of Edinburgh that is likely to benefit is Corstorphine, a middle-class residential area on the outskirts of the city, whereas central areas like Tollcross, the Grassmarket and the New Town will suffer. With the exception of Corstorphine residents, there has been overwhelming hostility to the plan at the four public meetings. The Alliance leader, Liberal councillor Donald Gorrie, represents Corstorphine on the district and regional councils, and will be defending his district seat at next May's elections.

'Consultation' is being carried out by professionals, one of whom described the hostile audiences at the public meetings as 'rent-a-mob'. Attention has also been drawn to the fact that one of the principal consultants, Professor Donald MacKay, is also an economic consultant to the Scottish Secretary George Younger, who has the final say on the road. The Scottish Office has been in favour of the development for years and in recent weeks has done it best to promote it.

Rob Edwards

MISCELLANY

Back to the jungle

Gloria Stewart, introduced to you last week as the woman who hadn't quite exposed the left-wing lunacy of Islington council in the *Daily Mail*, has been, we can now reveal, the *Mail*'s one-person dirty tricks department for over ten years. Last week she told *Mail* readers how she had posed as the Islington's Women's Collective Against State Oppression in Holloway Prison and asked the Labour council for money and accommodation. Naturally enough, she didn't get either, but the *Mail* nevertheless thought the story worth a double page spread and an untruthful leader the next day (which claimed it was 'an illustration of how public funds *are misapplied* by Left-Wingers in power all over the land'). Eleven years ago, Ms Stewart attacked comprehensive education in a series of articles about Elliott School in Putney called 'The Comprehensive Jungle'. Posing as a maths supply teacher, she taught in Elliott for three weeks and collected stories about every incident of vandalism and violence over the previous eight years. Her 'living the news' investigation exposed 'beatings up so frequent that they have become a normal part of school life. And teachers are often the targets'.

Ms Stewart, one can judge from the tone of her writing, is a disciplinarian. In fact, she is a strict disciplinarian, and in 1980 came to the defence of the headmaster of one the heaviest caning schools in Britain, Eastmoor High School in Wakefield. In one year the school's headmaster, Michael Schafer, administered 377 canings in a school with 613 pupils. In an article in the *Mail* entitled 'Why a gentle giant won't spare the rod' Ms Stewart praised his firm touch. Schafer was suspended in July last year and was dismissed earlier this year, mainly because teachers found him impossible to work with.

Ms Stewart believes Schafer was victimised by the NUT and says the school has now 'gone back to the jungle'. She adds: 'He was caning them very little towards the last few years.'

For someone who once described herself as a socialist to be supporting a child-beater might seem a little strange until one discovers where Ms Stewart gained the teaching experience that enabled her to infiltrate Elliott School. In the early 1960s she taught at Montefiore School in Stepney. One of her fellow teachers was a Mr Michael Schafer. Her headmaster, incidentally, was Dr Rhodes Boyson, whose removal from the Education Department in the last Cabinet reshuffle was such a relief to us all.

A balanced view

Every year the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London publishes a review of the state of the arms race called *The Military Balance*. The 1983 edition was published two weeks ago. In this, the year of cruise deployment, the IISS has left out the usual table on the balance of theatre nuclear forces in Europe 'for reasons of space'. We asked Colonel Jonathan Alford, deputy director of the IISS, if it wasn't rather important that the public should be informed about the balance of intermediate nuclear missiles at the time of the disarmament negotiations about them in Geneva? 'The situation has changed very little from last year,' he said. Does this mean the Russians have not increased the numbers of SS20s deployed in Eastern Europe? Shouldn't we be told? Still, Alford said the IISS would 'probably' produce the table next year. There might be some change by then.

Striking alteration

In January this year the Department of Employment produced an estimate of 8 million for the number of days lost in industrial disputes in the course of 1982. This figure is revised, usually upwards, to take into account the minor disputes shown up when the more detailed statistics come in. This year the figure was revised downwards, by 2.7 million. Not only is this a vast 'adjustment', but it is solely accounted for by a rewriting of the history of the 1982 NHS dispute. The original estimate that 3.4 million days had been lost in the nine-month dispute was reduced to 781,000. In other words the first estimate was over four times too high. The Department says the reason for the discrepancy is that health service administrators were too busy at the time to provide proper figures, so the estimates were made on the basis of 'unofficial sources'. In which case the Department's statistical methods must be called into question.

The other possibility is that the government wants to play down militancy in public sector unions. If the revised figures are to be believed, fewer than 20 per cent of NHS employees stopped work for at least a day during the dispute, as opposed to 50 per cent. Luckily, statistics seem to pass over the heads of the papers which made the most capital out of the strike. The *Financial Times* is the only paper so far to have noticed the revision.

Manifesto commitment

The Tariq Ali saga: part 94. Hornsey and Wood Green Labour Party moved one stage nearer terminal confrontation with the National Executive this week. The NEC's report to conference referred to steps that were being taken to expel Ali from the party. Hornsey's delegate challenged the report by asking for the conference to refer it back to the NEC. On a card vote the challenge was roundly defeated; so now, for the first time, the annual conference has explicitly backed the NEC's line.

Should Hornsey and Wood Green defy the NEC, the final sanction would be disbandment of the local party. Whatever the political consequences of such a step, the sheer entertainment factor should not be discounted. Among local party members who would be temporarily deprived of their membership cards are deputy leadership contestant Michael Meacher, new MP Jeremy Corbyn, recently ennobled Andrew McIntosh, and the political editors of both the *Guardian* and the *NS*, Ian Aitken and Peter Kellner.

Even more curious would be the position of Hornsey CLP secretary Diana Minns and party organiser Kathy Tattersal. They just happen to be the two women whose picture adorns the front cover of Labour's 1983 general election manifesto. It could be very embarrassing if they were expelled and *that* fact got to ITN, the BBC and the right-wing tabloids. So let's keep it quiet, eh?

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Hotel workers hunt for their new owners

THE NEW private owners of eight British Rail hotels are breaking promises they made to maintain the pay and conditions of the staff – but have disappeared behind a screen of off-the-peg companies leaving their newly-acquired employees no one to bargain with.

Two weeks ago the white collar union, the Transport and Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA), issued a writ to force the new owners of the Royal Station Hotel, Hull, to pay one of its members sick pay. The ultimate owners of the hotel, a family headed by Nazmudin Virani, failed to contest the writ. Whether the member will get her money is uncertain because of the byzantine maze of interlocking shell companies which nominally own the hotel.

The Virani family, who were ejected from Uganda by Amin, bought eight hotels from British Rail in March this year for £4.6 million. They are the Station Hotels at Aberdeen, Hull, Inverness, Newcastle and Perth, the Central Hotel at Glasgow, the Great Northern at Peterborough and the Manor House Hotel at Moreton Hampstead, the old Devon home of the W. H. Smith family.

On 6 April, the Virani family met the TSSA and the National Union of Railwaymen and assured them that pay and conditions would be maintained. British Rail says that the 1981 EEC regulations on the Transfer of Businesses also protected staff conditions.

The first inkling that the new owners would not sustain the established relationship was in May, when no annual pay rise was offered. (The purchasers of the other British Rail hotels produced a variety of pay settlements, mostly ranging from 3 per cent to 5 per cent.) More significantly the Viranis have not met the TSSA since April and do not reply to letters, or return telephone calls.

It is no longer clear who now owns the hotels. The staff have not been told, as they are required to be by law. British Rail says that the hotels were bought by Eclipsecare Ltd. This is a £1,000 off-the-peg private company. The Viranis bought the company on 8 February. On 8 April, shortly after the purchase, Nazmudin Virani and his brother Alnashir resigned as director and secretary of the company, to be replaced by two new directors. This company now appears to own just the hotel at Moreton Hampstead, which it has mortgaged. However, 999 of the 1,000 shares in the company are owned by Sulco Trading Ltd, of Main Street, Gibraltar.

The other seven hotels are also owned by off-the-peg companies which the Viranis bought earlier this year. Coinplan Ltd owns the Station Hotel, Newcastle, Impactlight the Station Hotel, Hull, Opticlodge the Station Hotel, Inverness, Peermead the Station Hotel, Perth, Quizgold the Station Hotel, Aberdeen, Newtonstone the Central Hotel, Glasgow and Buzzstar the Great Northern, at Peterborough.

The director of all these companies is Nazmudin Virani, and the company secretary his brother Alnashir. All the hotels have been mortgaged to Sulco Trading Ltd, those at Inverness, Perth, Aberdeen and Glasgow for £420,000, £350,000, £800,000 and £450,000 respectively. The hotels at Newcastle and Peterborough have also been re-mortgaged.

Nazmudin Virani is a director of about 50 companies, and owns nearly 12 per cent of Eric Morley's Belhaven Brewery. The main family company appears to be the Hansel and Gretel Hotel Ltd, which changed its name on 1 July to the Virani Group UK Ltd.

The Virani family, or rather Impactlight, will now have judgment entered against it. Other cases are in the pipeline. TSSA lawyers are examining the claims of an employee who agreed a severance deal, left the company, and then didn't get any money. The hotel workers who remain must hope that Norman Tebbit will now work out ways in which business owners can be made to honour contracts with their employees.

Mick Hamer

Legalised sexism for pottery workers

THOUSANDS of women workers in the pottery industry are deprived of the regular medical check-ups that their male colleagues receive, because of a legal anomaly, the DHSS has admitted. Under legislation drawn up in 1931, male workers in the industry must be medically examined every two years to check for pneumoconiosis and other dust-induced diseases. But although the legislation has been supposedly updated twice – most recently in 1980 – the scheme is still restricted to men.

'At the time the 1931 regulations were drawn up, women just weren't in these jobs', explained a DHSS official. 'Some changes were made in the legislation but this wasn't one of them. It's readily acknowledged there are anomalies of which this is one.'

Alf Clowes, General Secretary of the Ceramics and Allied Trades Union, points out that there are now more than 14,000 women working in the industry, about half of them doing exactly the same jobs as the men. He claims that regular and statutory medical check-ups for women would show up dust-induced diseases before reaching a critical stage.

'We've done everything and talked to everyone,' said Clowes. 'But we're still in the hands of those who think medical checks for women don't matter.'

Certainly the Ceramics division of the Health and Safety Executive won't be pressing for change. 'There's only a handful of new pneumoconiosis cases each year,' said Frank Martlew, a senior civil servant in the Ceramics group. 'So it's not really worth introducing a vast new surveying scheme for women.'

Sean Cahill

Cardiff prepares for Trident

THE ROYAL Ordnance factory in Cardiff, one of two centres for manufacturing radioactive components of nuclear weapons, is now gearing up towards production of the Trident warhead. The Property Services Agency has informed the city council of its intention to build a new concrete structure on the site, which will be used for storage.

In evidence to the Commons Defence Committee on 26 November 1980, C.C. Fielding, Director of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment (AWRE) at Aldermaston said: 'The development and production programme for the Trident warhead will be carried out jointly between AWRE and the two Royal Ordnance Factories at Burghfield and Cardiff.' He went on 'As the Chevaline assembly programme comes to an end, then the Burghfield and Cardiff capabilities would expect to pick that up in Trident and work towards the Trident assembly capacity *in toto*.' He expected production of the warhead to begin in the mid 1980s.

The Cardiff factory has a licence from the Welsh Office to store up to 50 tonnes of natural or depleted uranium on the site. It is also permitted to release low level radioactive waste into the air and sewers. There have been rumours of radioactive contaminated water from the factory getting into a nearby stream several years ago and flowing into Roath Park Lake. The council's Environmental Health Officer, Arthur Bryon, confirmed that early in 1982 he twice carried out tests on the stream which flows from the factory into the lake. He found no evidence of exceptional radioactivity, although the lake has been drained since the supposed leak. The Ministry of Defence described the story as 'absolute nonsense'.

Tom Horlick Jones and James Stewart

Paul Cleeland: Ministers stay silent

HOME OFFICE silence about the case of prisoner Paul Cleeland has been attacked by a Conservative MP as 'atrocious and indefensible'. Bowen Wells, Conservative MP for Stevenage, has criticised the Home Office for failing to respond to inquiries about Paul Cleeland who is serving a 20-year sentence for murder. Recent articles in the *New Statesman* (5 Aug and 16 Sept) have raised new doubts about the evidence used to convict Cleeland, who has campaigned for ten years to prove his innocence and has recently made allegations that he has been given drugs unlawfully.

Bowen Wells wrote to Leon Brittan in July, asking him for a response to Cleeland's allegations, but has still not received a reply. David Mellor has been asked to review Cleeland's case following the revelations in the *New Statesman* which, in legal terms, can be considered to 'cast doubt on the safety of the conviction'. He, too, is silent.

Even by its own standards the Home Office has been exceptionally obdurate in its consideration of Cleeland's case. In 1976 Shirley Williams (then MP for Stevenage) was not allowed, even as a Privy Councillor, to read the official enquiry into the case, which has never since been made public. In 1981 Dr Julius Grant, secretary of the Society of Forensic Medicine, assessed the ballistics evidence in the case and concluded that 'it would appear to provide Mr Cleeland with ample reasons for wanting the case reopened and on purely scientific grounds I cannot do other than support them'. Also in 1981, a senior barrister, asked to review the case, considered that there were 'a quite unusual number of blemishes in connection with the police evidence'.

Meanwhile Cleeland claims that he has been given drugs again. Last week, he says, he suffered from chest pains and palpitations, and his hands and feet swelled and went numb as the result of drugging. He claims that the drugging began last October, shortly after the Home Office had tried and failed 'to make a deal' with him. Cleeland maintains that a Mr Sandy, the then recently retired Governor of Parkhurst, visited him and suggested that on various conditions, including that Cleeland should seek no more publicity for his case, he would be released. The terms of the deal cannot be verified by any third witness, but that the meeting took place is confirmed by Cleeland's cousin, Tina Horn, who was visiting him at the time. Tina Horn told the *New Statesman* that Mr Sandy apologised for interrupting her visit.

Simon North

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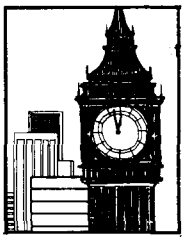

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

Thatcherism hits the rocks six months too late

MARGARET THATCHER's odyssey lasted just 18 months. When the Argentines invaded the Falklands in April last year, the government was unpopular and unsuccessful and Mrs Thatcher's 'satisfaction rating' according to Gallup, was as low as Edward Heath's or Harold Wilson's at their worst. The Falklands war changed everything except reality. It changed Thatcher's image, boosted the Tories' support and extinguished the Alliance's hopes of early power. It changed enough to give the Tories their landslide victory this June.

In the real world, however, where economic growth remains sluggish, unemployment continues to rise and public services face ever greater pressures, little has altered. In a curious way the diversion of the Parkinson affair may help to bring politics back to those realities; for what the fuss of the past week has done – on top of the fuss over the health service cuts and the arguments over future public spending plans – is to puncture the myth of Thatcher's invincibility. For 18 months little could go wrong for her: now little can go right.

If Cecil Parkinson were in the end to be forced to resign, only the Prime Minister herself of the members of the Falklands war cabinet would remain in active political life. Sir John Nott has left politics, Francis Pym has been sacked and Viscount Whitelaw been kicked upstairs. Even if Parkinson does stay for a time as Secretary for Trade and Industry, his political career is all but finished. No longer can he expect further promotion – even, one day, the premiership itself; all he can hope for is an extended stay of execution. For every member of the Falklands war cabinet (except, just possibly, Francis Pym) there is now nowhere to go politically but down.

For a party that this week should have been celebrating its June election victory, it is clearly a rum business. Thatcher, and Thatcherism, suddenly look vulnerable.

Tony Benn, among others, says we should not use the term 'Thatcherism'. In a way Benn is right: Thatcherism is the wrong word to describe an old-fashioned, right-wing assault on the jobs, living standards and public services of ordinary citizens. But there is another, more appropriate definition of Thatcherism. It is a style of leadership that puts guts before brains, populist appeal before rational calculation, conspicuous effort before measurable achievement. The 'Falklands factor' transformed itself into the 'Thatcher factor' not because the government had solved any of Britain's problems (least of all the future of the Falklands) but because the Prime Minister had a *style* of leadership that voters admired.

In translating that style into votes, Thatcher had three things going for her. First, until June, she was in her first period of office. As her central claim about the state of the British economy was that its defects were fundamental and needed more than five years to cure, she could meet criticisms of policy failure by saying that her remedies needed more time to work. But as soon as one election is over, campaigning for the next begins. By 1988 it will be impossible for Thatcher to deflect blame onto her predecessors.

Second, Thatcher faced a leader of the opposition who was far more unpopular than she ever was, presiding over a Labour Party at war with itself. However feeble the government's achievements, they looked magnificent against the perceived capability of the rival team. TINA – 'there is no alternative' – was always ludicrous as a statement of economic strategy: its appeal was mainly *political*. What eventually impressed electors was not that there was no effective economic alternative to monetarism, but that there was no effective political alternative to the Tories. That asset, too, is now dwindling as Labour begins to recover.

Third, Thatcher had luck. Had the Argentines waited another six months until Britain's navy had been more run-down; or had an Exocet missile sunk *HMS Hermes* – the story of the past year would have been very different. Maybe now her luck is evaporating as quickly as her other assets. Only a bold, not to say foolhardy, commentator could have predicted on 10 June that this autumn's Labour Party conference would manifest such scences of harmony, to be followed a week later by a Tory Party conference so scarred by scandal.

IT WOULD BE tempting to think that Thatcher's reputation as a tough, effective leader is now shattered beyond repair. All conventional analysis – the sort that doesn't pay much attention to such things as style and luck – points that way. But two years ago no conventional analysis would have predicted a Tory majority in the House of Commons today of 144. Can Thatcher defy the laws of electoral gravity again?

To do so, she must first of all retain her position of dominance over her party. For the moment, it seems ludicrous to call it into question. But in the autumn of 1981, at the height of the Alliance's upsurge, it was by no means certain that her authority would remain unchallenged. Think ahead to, say, 1985. Imagine the Tories lagging in the polls, losing by-elections, presiding over ever-rising unemployment and an economy that stubbornly refuses to recover at anything faster than snail's pace. The next election is in view, Neil Kinnock has established himself as an effective challenger to the Prime Minister and more than 100 Conservative MPs fear that they may lose their seats.

I am not – yet – predicting serious trouble for Thatcher inside the Conservative Party. She still has a great deal of credit to spend: after all, June's election victory was, above all, *her* victory. And her powers of patronage inside the party – in the cabinet, at Westminster and at Central Office – are immense.

Rather, I am suggesting that in order to avert trouble Thatcher will need to assert her personal authority with yet greater vigour, as she will be unable to deliver policy achievements that would command willing consent. 'Thatcherism' – in the leadership style rather than economic ideology sense of the term – will become an ever more lurid and oppressive feature of our political life.

In practical terms that means more bombastic, anti-Russian speeches, more angry token gestures against Brussels, more virulent verbal attacks on the trade unions (whatever the actual legislation ends up decreeing) and more ardent appeals to Victorian and other elusive values. The stridency of her language will grow in inverse proportion to the effectiveness of her policies.

As long as her nerve and her health hold out, and as long as she is not seen obviously to make a crass miscalculation, she must have a sporting chance that this kind of Thatcherism will continue to succeed. But if her judgment fails her, it may take only a minor incident to knock Thatcherism off its fragile pedestal.

Which brings us back to the wretched business of Mr Parkinson and Miss Keays. We now know that Parkinson intended to leave his wife and marry his mistress and that he finally changed his mind only after telling the Prime Minister that Miss Keays was pregnant. What we don't yet know is whether Parkinson took the decision to stay with his wife on his own counsel, or on the Prime Minister's advice. Should it turn out that the act for which Parkinson has received his greatest criticism – 'leaving Sara Keays in the lurch' – was in fact the result of Mrs Thatcher's intervention, then it may not be *his* indiscretion that ends up harming the Tory Party so much as *her* misjudgment. Thatcherism cannot afford to make that kind of mistake. □

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Disruption for the cities

Last week the government published a half-baked and politically motivated White Paper for changing the pattern of our major cities' government. Tony Travers describes the practical chaos that would result in London

COMPARED TO 'capping' local authority rates – the government's proposals to put a limit on how much rates can rise in any one year – abolishing the Greater London Council (and the English metropolitan county councils) must have seemed simple enough to the Tories. Last week's White Paper, *Streamlining the Cities*, reflected the blithe spirit in which Mr Patrick Jenkin, the Environment Secretary, approached the problem of carrying out the Tory election manifesto commitment. Set up a joint board or two, split up responsibility for some services to the existing boroughs and surely cost savings and greater efficiency would spontaneously occur.

In practice, the complexity of breaking up the GLC has been wholly underestimated by Tory politicians at the national level. The technical and financial difficulties alone, caused by London's very high rateable values, the historic way in which the provision of services has developed, its vast existing borrowings and its pension funds, are quite simply enormous.

Key to these problems is the fact that breaking up the GLC would involve devolution of local government back downwards to smaller authorities. Almost all previous local government reform has involved merging all or part of the functions of two or more existing authorities into new, larger entities. The GLC itself was constructed out of the old London County Council, Middlesex County Council and parts of the other surrounding shire counties. Existing debt, pension funds and the like were passed upwards to the new bodies. Nothing had to be broken up, or divided down to bodies of lesser standing.

What is now being proposed is quite different. In the case of London, a large authority is to be dismembered, with some of its services being handed over to the 32 borough councils and the City of London and others being administered on a London-wide basis by statutory boards, or new quangos. London Transport would, in effect, become a new nationalised industry, under direct government control.

The government has said that it wants to keep the number of joint boards to a minimum. The White Paper proposes one to run the fire services and one for education in the 12 Inner London boroughs and the City (at present the responsibility of the elected Inner London Education Authority). But this means that the existing GLC responsibilities for housing, waste disposal, highways, judicial services and the arts will have to be handed down to the boroughs, or taken over directly by central government or its agencies.

Quite apart from the practical arguments against a proposal that 32 independent councils should take over responsibility for disposing of refuse for a built-up area with seven million inhabitants (at present, they only collect refuse; the GLC disposes of it), the financial problems created by the new proposals for transport and other services would be enormous.

For London is far and away the most wealthy part of the country. The City of London alone (population 5,900) has much the same rateable value as Wales (population 2,800,000). The same rate in the pound for both places would finance totally different levels of services. To cope with these huge and unacceptable rateable variations, the government operates a 'block grant' to compensate authorities with low rateable resources. This block grant is part of the immensely complicated Rate Support Grant system, by which central government contributes about half of local authorities' total income (with some individual authorities getting more, some less).

UNDER EXISTING legislation, the block grant can only be used to *increase* an individual authority's effective rateable value. As a result, authorities which start with very high rateable wealth still keep a substantial part of their advantage over the others. The only way in which full 'equalisation' could take place would be by applying actual 'negative grants' to some authorities, notably those in central London. These would have to be required to contribute to a pool which would then be redistributed to less well-off authorities.

Until now, this difficulty has partly been overcome by the existence of the GLC and the way in which the Metropolitan Police is financed. Both are financed by precepts levied throughout Greater London. ILEA is financed in the same way via the inner London boroughs. The effect of these precepts is that more money is collected from the wealthy central London boroughs than from the outer areas, though the spending in each borough is roughly in proportion to its population.

When the block grant and the precepting has been dealt with, the government looks at the overall result and makes a judgment about its 'fairness'. Have Westminster, the City and Camden, for example, paid enough for the services they are getting, compared with the rest of the country? In recent years, the answer has always been 'no.' So an additional adjustment has been made. This is known as the 'London Rate Equalization Scheme' and is operated under the 1963 London Government Act. (For 1983-4, £67 million was collected from the non-domestic ratepayers of the City and Westminster for redistribution to the other 31 London boroughs.)

Once a change like breaking up the GLC, or transferring responsibility for London Transport is made, the whole intricate complexity of these equalisation arrangements is wrecked. Take, for example, the proposal in a previous White Paper on public transport that concessionary fares for pensioners should become a borough function. (At present, the GLC raises the money for this scheme.)

Quite apart from the difficulties of operating 32 individual schemes (would they only work within a borough, or over the whole LT area?), money would inevitably shift from outer back to inner London. The table shows what the four boroughs with the highest and lowest rateable values are estimated to contribute to and receive from the exist-

	Contribution	Receipt	Net gain/(loss)
Westminster	£8.37m	£1.72m	(£6.65m)
City	£6.99m	£0.03m	(£6.96m)
Camden	£3.01m	£1.55m	(£1.46m)
Kensington & Chelsea	£1.87m	£1.16m	(£0.71m)
Greenwich	£0.85m	£1.60m	£0.75m
Waltham Forest	£0.82m	£1.83m	£1.01m
Lewisham	£0.91m	£1.92m	£1.01m
Bexley	£0.83m	£1.51m	£0.68m

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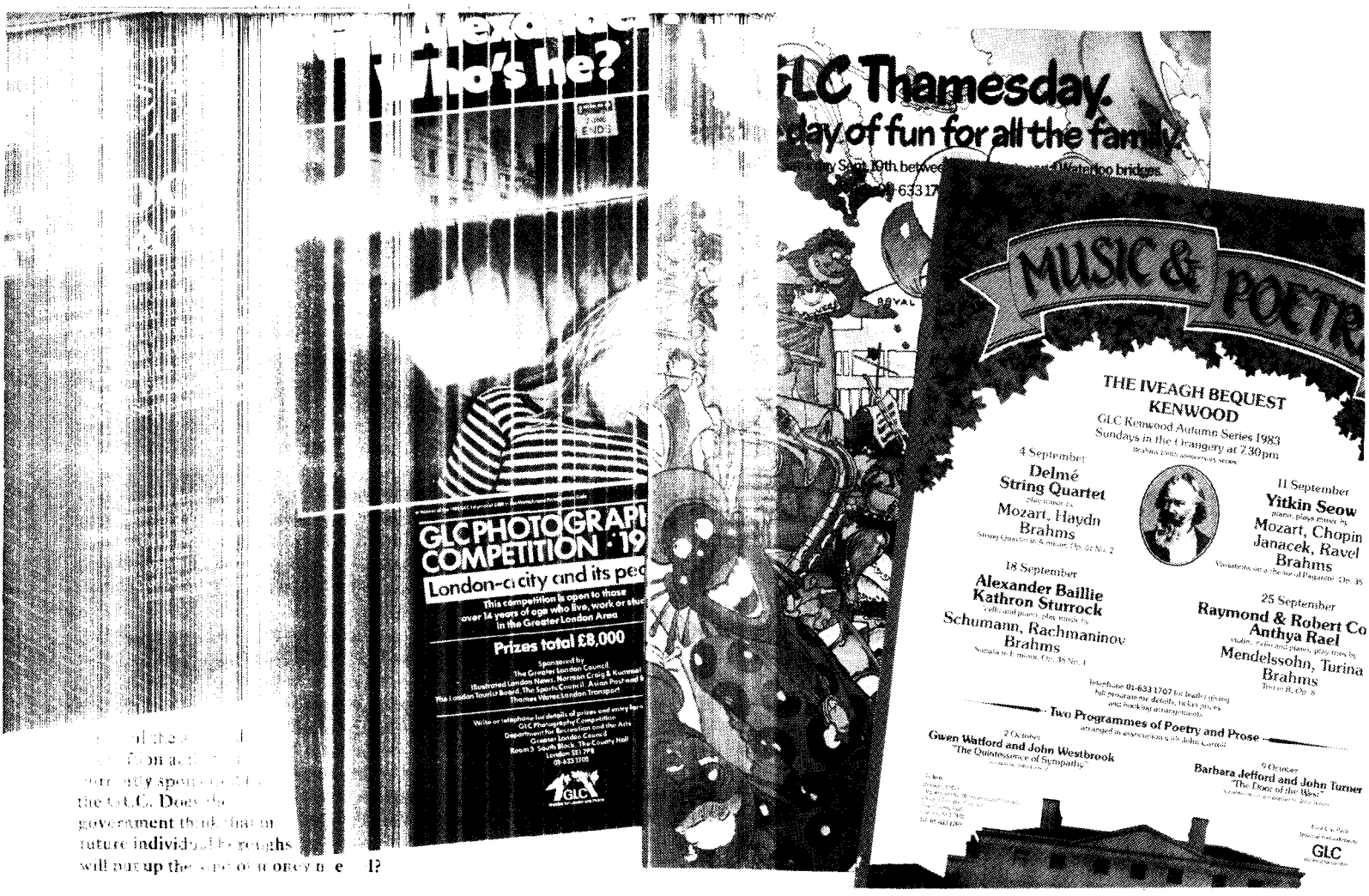

ing scheme. It shows that the outer authorities in central London contribute heavily to the concessionary fares in the other 29 boroughs. Once these concessions were a borough responsibility, the four top boroughs would be better off, i.e. would pay lower rates. But the other 29 would lose by amounts much greater than would be clawed back through the block grant. The same problem would arise for every service devolved from the GLC to the boroughs. If, as a result, the outer boroughs managed to increase their share of the block grant, this would also involve a shift of resources from the rest of the country to London.

TO GET AROUND the similar financial problems that would be created by the transfer of responsibility for London Transport, the Department of the Environment has proposed that the London Rate Equalization Scheme be extended. The central London boroughs would be required (probably under new legislation) to contribute into a pool an amount equal to their benefit arising from the new administrative arrangements. This would then be distributed to the other 29 authorities. The second arrangement would be a 'direct levy' – in effect, a London Tax – which would raise the amount required to subsidise LT from all the London boroughs in much the way that the GLC does now. The same suggestions could, in theory, be applied to the transfer of other services.

Establishing schemes or levies of this kind would be difficult. The existing London Rate Equalization Scheme is quite arbitrary and extended use of it would mean still greater power in the hands of the Environment Department. In addition, the Scheme was never intended to be used for vast redistribution of resources, but as an instrument for fine-tuning. A direct levy on London by the government would be a radical departure in British taxation. Both proposals would be cumbersome and subjective.

Other huge problems stand in the way of the proposed abolition of the GLC. It has over £2 billion of accumulated debt from past capital expenditure, some of it inherited from the old LCC and Middlesex County Council. The government's proposal is to set up a quango to take over this debt, with powers to raise a special 'debt precept' from the boroughs to service it and to pay for the cost of its own administration. The White Paper also proposes that some kind of joint board or quango should take over the GLC superannuation fund. This is worth over £700 million and at present administers pensions for the GLC and more than 100 other linked institutions that do not have pension funds of their own. It is difficult to believe that the switch to these quangos will not involve huge administrative problems and considerable increases in administrative costs.

There are yet more fundamental issues that would face a London without the GLC. The boroughs to which all these extra functions are supposed to pass were set up, by a previous Conservative government, on the basis that a GLC existed. If a previous Conservative government had not set up the GLC in 1963, the structure of the London boroughs would almost certainly have been different. As the table shows, many of the boroughs today have much smaller populations than when they were set up.

	1959	1983 est.	% fall
Islington	257,430	167,400	35.0
Hammersmith	222,200	149,700	32.6
Tower Hamlets	207,400	139,996	32.5
Kensington & Chelsea	216,020	146,000	32.4
Westminster	278,470	194,900	30.0
Hackney	256,730	183,200	28.6
Camden	246,880	183,000	25.9
Inner London (total)	3,204,000	2,350,196	26.6

The population of some of the outer London boroughs has also fallen considerably. At the same time, the creation of the Docklands Development Corporation and of joint 'partnership' schemes between central and local government for the development of some inner London boroughs have made further changes to the nature of London's local government. With local government *spending* increasing, in real terms, and local authority *finance* under increasing pressure, governments have tried and failed to find alternatives. The result of this failure is that London now has both a structural and a financial crisis.

But the proposed abolition of the GLC will not solve either. It will give the government even more direct control over the financing of London government. It may give two or three central London boroughs a short-term advantage, as the other boroughs – particularly in outer London – pay more for what are currently GLC-provided services. London's government is certainly in need of basic reform. But what is now being proposed is not reform. All we can expect is several years of chaos, resulting in a sad and tatty mess. □

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HOUSING POLICY

From the foundations up

Can Labour devise a radical housing strategy to counter the 'right-to-buy' chimaera? Chris Hamnett considers the options

THERE ARE TWO housing problems in Britain today – the national housing problem and Labour's housing problem. The national problem is well known – a growing housing shortage, rising disrepair, rising homelessness and rising council waiting lists. Labour's problem is, at first sight, smaller – what policy to adopt on council house sales. But this is just the visible tip of the iceberg now facing those who will have to work on a Labour housing policy.

The impact of the Conservatives' controversial 'right-to-buy' policy on the general election results of 1979 and 1983 has thrown into sharp relief the problems posed for Labour by the steady growth of owner-occupation and the expressed preference of a large and growing proportion of the population for owner-occupation.

Today, council housing comprises almost a third of the stock and owner-occupation is almost 60 per cent. Although there is still a marked difference in the social composition of the two tenures, the steadily widening social base of owner-occupation has meant that the majority of skilled manual workers are now owner-occupiers rather than council tenants. Many of Labour's traditional voters now own their own home.

Given the undoubted financial benefits of owner-occupation over council housing, under the existing pattern of tax relief – an imbalance which has been deliberately exacerbated by Heseltine's policy of massive council rent increases – it is scarcely surprising that many of those able to afford it are buying their council houses. Contrary to Conservative claims, there is nothing particularly 'natural' about this. Tenure preferences are a *result* of the structure of tenurial opportunities and advantages.

The Tories, of course, have never been enthusiastic supporters of state housing. A high level of owner-occupation has long been seen on the right as a 'Bulwark against Bolshevism and everything Bolshevism stands for', as Sir Harold Bellman, a one-time chairman of the Building Societies Association, described it in the 1920s.

As the Tories realised, their policy of selling council housing could kill two birds with one stone. It reduced the size of the council sector, while increasing owner-occupation proportionately. As a vehicle for destroying the link between council housing and Labour voting and strengthening the size of the owner-occupied Tory vote, it was ideal.

The policy proved extremely popular with many of those council tenants who could afford to buy. As it enabled them to purchase a house for between a half and two-thirds of its value, this is hardly surprising. In the 1983 election, the Tories went on the offensive again with the declared intention of increasing the number of council house sales from the 500,000 already achieved to 2,000,000. A Labour victory, said the ads, would take away your right to buy your council house. In the space of just three years, the sale of council housing had been manipulated by the Tories from a controversial and radical policy into a 'right' which Labour found difficult to challenge.

Within a month of the election, Roy Hattersley was arguing for a re-think on the right-to-buy issue. A re-think is needed, but what exactly is Labour to do? Opinion is split. On one side, there are those like Peter Hain and Nigel Stanley who argue that Labour must come to terms with the reality of a predominantly owner-occupied society. In order not to be forced on the ideological defensive, they argue that it is imperative to allow sitting tenants to buy – not least because so many of Labour's middle-class members are already home-owners.

On the other side, there is the Labour Housing Group, which argues that if it capitulates on the 'right-to-buy' issue, Labour will fall victim to narrow political expediency. The LHG argument goes much further, however – a debate on the right-to-buy question is seen as a debate on the wrong question. The LHG argues (rightly) that what Labour needs to do is confront the housing question in its entirety and to go onto the political offensive with a 'right to a home' campaign.

WHAT LABOUR must do is to argue that the right-to-buy legislation in fact benefits a relatively small minority of better-off council house tenants – those who live in the nice houses with gardens. It neither improves housing conditions for the majority, nor adds to the existing stock of housing. Labour must make much more of the cutbacks in Tory housing expenditure. It must also vigorously attack the myth of the featherbedded council tenant, pointing both to the massive rent increases imposed on them by the Tories and to the fact that many councils now actually make a 'profit' on their housing revenue accounts. Mortgage interest tax relief to home owners is now some £2,000m a year, over twice the overall subsidy for council tenants. Labour must tackle the regressive subsidies at present paid out to home buyers.

This strategy, however, has two main problems. The first is that Labour cannot fudge the right-to-buy question. There is no doubt that the current discount sales policy is benefitting a minority of existing tenants handsomely at the expense of those who live in flats and those on the council waiting list. However, it is equally clear that many tenants would like to buy if they could.

Labour has a number of options. First, it could simply reassert as vigorously as possible its existing policy of not being opposed to council house sales in principle, but insist that any decision on sales must be left to the discretion of locally elected councils. Second, it could concede the right-to-buy case, subject to the abolition or reduction of discounts. Third, it could concede sales at a discount subject to the local council having a right of first refusal to buy at the original sale price (increased to take account of inflation). This would enable people to buy cheaply, but would effectively restrict their

Tories want 2,000,000 to follow No. 68's example

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capacity to make huge capital gains.

All these options are essentially negative. They represent attempts to limit either sales or the possible financial benefits which might accrue to the tenants as a result of sales. This is the second and more fundamental problem. Any attempt to develop a coherent policy towards council housing in isolation is doomed to failure. A solution to the council house sales problem depends on the overall reform of housing finance.

But this is easier said than done. Anthony Crosland tried to grasp the nettle in the mid 1970s, but Peter Shore then ducked it and, with each year that passes, the problem gets more difficult to resolve. Until Mrs Thatcher in this year's budget forced up to £30,000 the level up to which mortgage payments qualified for tax relief, it had remained fixed at £25,000 for almost ten years. There seemed to be an accepted agreement to keep it at that £25,000 so as to let its 'real value' be gradually eroded by rising house prices and rising mortgages.

Thatcher's decision seems to have put paid, however, to that consensus. Now that almost 60 per cent of households are owner-occupiers, any future reduction in the level of tax relief would be the political 'kiss of death' to any party. What Thatcher appreciated was that, although the average mortgage was only £18,000 nationally, it was nudging £25,000 in the Tory heartland of London and the South East.

When this is added to the right to buy, it would appear that the Tories have captured the housing issue for all time. The policy is obviously inequitable and expensive, but that is a small price to pay to ensure the creation of a society of Tory-voting houseowners. If it tries to fight on this front, Labour is on a hiding to nothing. There is nothing to stop the Tories bumping up the tax relief on mortgages whenever it seems politically expedient.

What Labour has to do is nothing less than to try to map out an entirely new system of housing subsidy which is not 'tenure related'. In the current economic situation, there are many owner-occupiers who are finding it difficult to maintain their mortgage payments, or, if they are elderly, retired or on low incomes, adequately to maintain their homes. There are large numbers of potential owner-occupiers who find it difficult, if not impossible, to buy, owing to the size of the deposit needed and the 'front loading' of interest payments. The new system for the payment of housing benefits has proved a disaster and this presents an opportunity for Labour to propose something better which embraces all low-income households and which cuts the Gordian knot of low-benefit take up rates.

What Labour needs to do is to examine in detail the case for a universal housing allowance linked to both income and the economic price of housing and operated through the tax system. It is only by making a radical break with the existing system of housing finance that Labour is going to be able to create a new political constituency for those in housing need. What it must not do is to perpetrate the existing system of two housing tenures for the Two Nations. □

ARCHITECTURE

Involving the people

Moyra Doorly looks forward to a social experiment

A NEW ACRONYM should, if all goes well, soon be on the lips of ordinary people everywhere. It is ACTAC, standing for the Association of Community Technical Aid Centres, and it aims to do for architecture and planning what Law Centres have done for legal services – i.e. make technical expertise serve the needs of the powerless.

ACTAC is going public this week, with an exhibition at the Seven Dials Gallery in Covent Garden, London. Under the banner 'Working with the Local Community' are exhibits from over 30 established groups, ranging from architectural practices to local charities which have earned the title 'community technical aid centres'. ACTAC's role is to bring these groups together as a consolidated movement with the organisation to campaign for its aims. It hopes to include groups as diverse as Matrix, the feminist design cooperative, and the Rural Preservation Society.

But, with the current crisis of conscience over housing – what right has the Left got to dam the tide for individual home improvement? – might not the new centres just be used to provide the less well-off with the longed-for porch extension or attic conversion? Founder member Marc Dorfman, who is a planner with Camden Borough, says firmly that the purpose of ACTAC is 'to democratise the process by which change in the environment is made'. The organisation itself declares that its aim is 'to increase awareness of the importance of community self-help and user control in the improvement and development of land, buildings and neighbourhood.'

Discontent with building developments burgeoned in the 1960s, since when protests against decisions made by planning authorities have become commonplace. When architect Rod Hackney helped a local group in Macclesfield to save and restore their doomed terraced houses, the media joined in the applause. 'There is a new type of architect, a community architect, working on the site 24 hours a day', said *Tomorrow's World* in 1977.

In 1979, the Town and Country Planning Association set up the first agency calling itself a community technical aid centre in Manchester, with a planner and architect funded by the Manpower Services Commission. In the same year, COMTECHSA was set up in Liverpool, funded by the Inner City Partnership Programme, employing architects, planners and landscape architects. ▷

Just for starters

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Trudi Down
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Philip Gregson
Mark Hawksworth
Mike Houghton
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Mobil

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But it is not only in Liverpool (see page 27) that the division between community self-help and State paternalism doesn't fall neatly into left and right camps. Labour authorities as well as Tories have to be convinced not to push through developments against the express wishes of the local community affected. One argument on the side of ACTAC is money; after studying many cases, the Royal Institute of British Architects' Community Artchitecture Working Group came to the conclusion that, if residents are actively involved in the development process, the physical environment will be better maintained, thus creating considerable financial savings.

Addressing the ACTAC launch, therefore, were Sir George Young from the Department of the Environment, as well as the GLC planning chairman. Such new official support follows on considerable popular support. Martin Goodrich of Free Form Environmental Services, based in Hackney, says: 'Whenever we work on a project with people, we are deluged with requests for help from groups and individuals wanting something for their area.' An example of how community technical aid actually works can be gleaned from the group's work on the Goldsmith's Square Estate in Hackney. A tenants' association there approached Free Form Environmental Services through the GLC's directory of aid groups to help them prepare proposals for the estate's improvement.

Why could not an architect, hired by Hackney Council and accountable to its housing department, have provided the same service? First, because the residents have the right to be consulted in the same way as a private client with the funds would be. Terrible mistakes have been made in the past because the architect has consulted the local authority *on behalf of* the users.

Secondly, the status of client has a marked effect on the tenants. At Goldsmith's, tenants are becoming involved in considering changes to the entire estate. Plans to revamp the dilapidated community centre are being discussed. The GLC and Hackney Borough, co-owners of the estate, are now meeting with tenants to discuss proposals for adjacent derelict properties and are looking for workshop space in the surrounding area. Several of the unemployed young people on the estate have been given employment in the improvement work.

Barbara Wheeler-Early, from Free Form, said: 'We always try to get people to participate in projects, whether it's making tea, laying bricks or planting. The feeling of goodwill this creates cannot be measured just as the consultation process cannot be costed.'

The exhibition runs for a week from 24 October. In the coming year, ACTAC will bid for funding for two permanent officers, work space and a van to carry out the tasks of education and fieldwork and to 'enable the Association through its regional network to add impetus to the initiatives taking place at grass roots level'. ACTAC reckons that it will need a minimum of £50,000 to fund it for its first year. □

EDUCATION

Opening the door

Paul Corrigan, head of department at the Polytechnic of North London, responds to last week's attack by HM Inspectors

ONE OF NEIL KINNOCK'S last successes with Labour education policy was the argument for a wider access to higher education. The Party's programme is now committed to opening up this valuable resource to a broader section of working-class people. Yet one of the major blockages to this has been the extremely specific nature of both 'A' levels and secondary schooling as the primary filter for entry or non-entry.

Some local authorities (most notably the Inner London Education Authority) and the polytechnics have worked closely with both adult and further education institutions to broaden the mature student entry from local working people. This provides one of the contexts that is necessary to understand the recent HM Inspectors' report on two social science departments at The Polytechnic of North London.

In language reminiscent of the 1950s, the inspectors continually refer to 'a long tail of poor achievers', 'mature students' and 'unstreamed teaching'. This is nothing but a threadbare disguise for their distaste at a change in the age, class and ethnic pattern of students and the resulting change in employment opportunity for this population.

With ILEA's direct blessing, PNL has followed a policy of access courses which are as rigorous as any 'A' level, though without having the blinkering effect so characteristic of that form of examination. In the last three weeks, some 700 students have been registered for a variety of degrees and professional qualifications in the two departments under attack and few are straight from secondary school.

Over the last decade, we have successfully developed and taught courses specifically aimed at mature students. It is this success that has brought down the wrath of the Secretary of State, for, if this model were taken up on such a scale elsewhere, there would be two consequences.

First, it would make a nonsense of any argument for less higher educational provision. The falling rolls which have cut a swathe through primary and secondary education are about to reach higher education. If we succeed in breaking the absurd link between higher education and 18-year-olds, there will be a massive increase in demand from the whole population. Under such circumstances, the cuts in provisions may well meet with more resolute opposition – not just from middle-class parents, but from whole localities.

Secondly, and this resounds through both the HMIs' report and other thinking about higher education, there are many people who simply do not look 'right' in academe. Not just in the buildings, but actually having the gall to gain degrees and use them in the labour market. *That* is why our students are pilloried in this report; that is why the external assessors for our courses are also attacked, by implication, since they, with us, allow the 'wrong sort of people' to get degrees. It is as if Keith Joseph now recognises that the battle for privilege, being too hard to fight at the secondary level, must be fought at the next level on.

THERE ARE OTHER political messages from this report. It is widely known that Sir Keith Joseph, with the aid of the Chairwoman of the Conservative educational study group, Baroness Cox, has PNL social science in his sights. We would expect no less of a radical politician such as Sir Keith, though we may be more surprised to be attacked by a former head of the PNL Sociology Department who had, herself, signed the submission documents to the CNAA for one of the degrees under attack. However, what has been alarming in this episode is the way in which the HMIs rushed to his assistance. They admitted that they came several months earlier than they had planned to; they admitted that they did not have subject expertise; that May is not really a useful time to look at degree courses with the proximity of examinations; that the courses had already been radically rewritten and would be different in October; that the whole process left them with little evidence to judge. Yet the report was rushed out.

We are used to validations, inspections and enquiries in the two departments in question. We have had 13 in the last six years. All of them, with the exception of this one, have been carried out with subject knowledge and expertise. Three visits by the CNAA this year have all resulted in commendation following searching examinations. Can so many eminent members of the CNAA get it so wrong *so* often?

No, we are rather afraid that the Inspectorate on this occasion acted out of great haste because it could feel the cost-cutting axe of the Minister about to descend, either on them or the CNAA. After all, if Sir Keith's friends say that we are a hotbed of sloppy Marxists, how is it that the HMIs did not have the hard evidence to back that up? Obviously they didn't in May; yet, since then, something has been found.

These issues go beyond education to Margaret Thatcher's long march through the institutions of the State. Historically, the Inspectors have been jealous of their independence from political masters (and mistresses). Giving in to political pressure has resulted in a fall from their traditional standards.

While a battle rages in the DES, we shall continue, with the support of ILEA, to maintain the Authority's right to provide access to higher education for the people of London. Of course, the Tories will try to dismantle ILEA as well – but, for that, they will need a great deal more than an ill-timed and badly researched HMI report. □

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a documentary and performance of Peter Brook's profound re-working of this popular opera
The full opera will be shown on Channel 4

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a biography of one of Britain's most distinguished and versatile artists, at the time of his Tate Gallery retrospective

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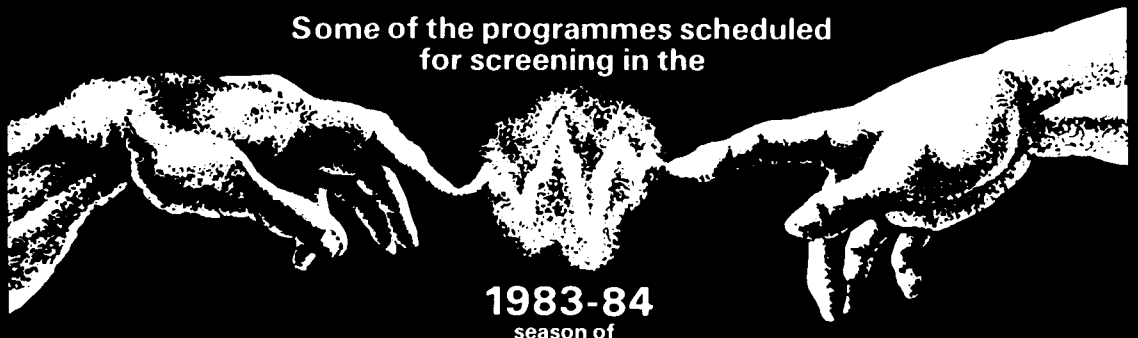
HOCKNEY THE PHOTOGRAPHER

about whom Hockney says "I may be one of those people who in the end will say 'the only good things I ever did were all those photos, all the other stuff is junk or pointless'"

Some of the programmes scheduled for screening in the



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DIARY

Francis Wheen

Blackpool

Cecil Parkinson is not alone. Some of the weekend papers pointed out that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, had a baby with his second wife before he had got round to divorcing the first one. But the Tories' marital acrobatics go much further than that. Leon Brittan had an affair with a woman called Diana Peterson while she was still married to someone else; he finally plighted his troth to her a couple of years ago, when her divorce came through. Sir Keith Joseph and his wife separated in 1978. Lord Gowrie has been divorced and remarried. So have Lynda Chalker and Nicholas Ridley. Douglas Hurd was divorced last year and then, without pausing for breath, plunged into matrimony again. Norman Fowler's entry in *Who's Who* states simply that he married Fiona Poole in 1979. So he did; but he neglects to mention that he was married before, to the journalist Linda Christmas. If one were to turn one's attention from ministers to backbenchers, the list would fill several pages (Geoffrey Dickens, Winston Churchill and a cast of hundreds). I wouldn't revive these unhappy memories but for the fact that this government has seen fit to lecture us, in rather self-righteous tones, about the importance of the family and the sanctity of marriage. Lest we forget, Mrs Thatcher herself is married to a divorced man.

○

By the by, it is a little-known fact that Denis Thatcher's first wife, who was also called Margaret, went on to marry a baronet named Sir Alfred Hickman. They had issue. The child of this first Margaret Thatcher is now called Sir Glenn Hickman, having succeeded to the baronetcy in 1979. He lives in the constituency of Hertsmere, where his MP is one Cecil Parkinson. Just thought I'd mention it.

○

After Cecil Parkinson became the Tory Party's chairman and chief matinée idol in 1981, much was made of his 'humble' origins. Here (we were informed) is the embodiment of the New Conservatism, a self-made man who has achieved everything by his own endeavours. I was therefore interested to learn from last week's *Observer* that Parkinson actually made his pile by a more traditional method: he married a wealthy woman who had inherited a family firm. You may recall that this was precisely the route taken by that other great meritocrat, Margaret Thatcher (who told a friend at university that 'I am going to marry a rich man and then go into politics'). One is reminded, as so often, of the late Sir Cyril Osborne, who used to complain that, in the Conservative Party, 'It's the bed you were born in or the one you climb into that decides'.

○

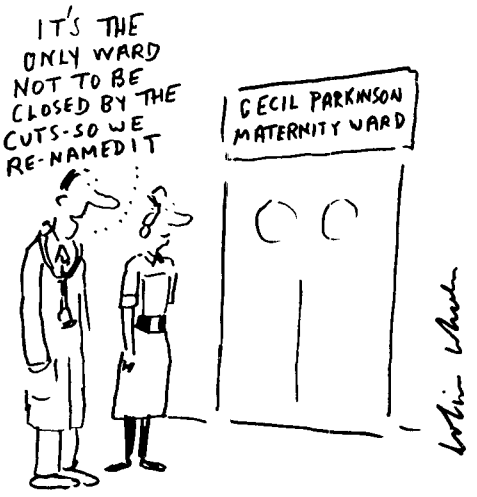
On 2 February this year, C4's *Comment* programme was presented by a no-nonsense Conservative. Here are some extracts: 'Presumably Mr Foot judges Mrs Thatcher by his own elastic standards . . . I hope the government will go ahead with its public information exercise and protect the people from the misleading scaremongering of the so-called peace movement . . . It is important that the misinformation campaign of the Left should be exposed and the public be given the facts about these complex issues . . . The Labour Party generally and the left wing in particular . . . delight in embarrassing their allies'. The speaker, who was described as a 'parliamentary adviser', was Ms Sara Keays, now the most famous pregnant woman in Britain.

○

Positively the last word on sex. We are constantly being told that the new party chairman, the ludicrous John Selwyn Gummer, is a devout Christian. Fair enough. But one question needs to be answered. He did not marry until 1977, yet, in 1971, in his book *The Permissive Society*, he wrote that 'sex is fun'. How did he know?

○

The Tory conference is shamelessly rigged, of course, and most delegates (sorry, 'representatives') seem to like it that way. After all, they are in the Conservative Party because they believe in deference and obedience to those in authority. But, in the past, there have always been a few debates in which they allowed themselves to be a touch rebellious – notably Rhodesia, hanging and immigration. This year they are only getting immigration. Rhodesia has become Zimbabwe and is beyond the reach of even



Julian Amery. The hanging question has been settled for the next five years at least, and was only mentioned *en passant* during Tuesday's law'n'order debate. As for immigration, Mrs Thatcher has placated all but the Monday Club with her Nationality Act. So the representatives are left with a lot of steam that needs letting off, but the only subjects remaining to them are the campaign for votes for British holidaymakers (dozens of motions on this), or the absurdly low cost of the dog licence.

○

Still, some right-wingers struggle on, undaunted by this week's attacks on the party's jackboot fetishists. Lady Birdwood's group 'Choice' has put out a leaflet demanding 'that Mrs Thatcher be forthwith allocated a new constituency where aliens pose no threat to British politics' (the aliens in question are identified as Jews and Asians) and that 'the franchise be immediately and unconditionally withdrawn from all non-ethnic Britons, no matter how many years they have lived and voted here'. There is also a frisky little motion from Central Suffolk Conservatives: 'The Irish Republic prides itself on its exclusivism and its separateness from the rest of Britain. Let us now assist it in seeking isolation and invite its citizens to remove themselves from the United Kingdom.' That's more like it.

○

Whenever I am in Blackpool for party conferences I am compelled to adopt a Tower-of-Pisa posture by the gales that come raging down the promenade. One reassuring taxi driver told me that he had seen a man lifted off the ground by the wind. Nevertheless, in spite of the weather, Blackpool is a ceaseless delight. The signs give you a taste of it: 'See rock made', they exhort; 'Meet our fire eater'; 'Mud wrestling'; 'Europe's largest aquarium, 3,000 fish'; 'Circus extended to 15 October – the world's most exciting acts plus the amazing water spectacle'; and, inevitably, 'The Mighty Wurlitzer'. There are also the Illuminations, which extend for miles along the seafront and are ceremonially switched on every August. 'We had some people from *Coronation Street* doing it this year', one resident told me, 'but we nearly got Barry Manilow. Now that would have been something.'

ROGER WODDIS

Legs and the Man

Behold the body politic
Consumed by base desire,
The lower orders of the flesh
Dictating to the higher.

In love or lust it matters not
(The difference is a slight one)
Which class of leg is laid across,
The left leg or the right one.

But it behoves a gentleman
To do the decent thing
And choose between a loaded gun
And purchasing a ring.

The fault which feeds a rich man's whim
And breeds a woman's shame
Lies not in giving her a child,
But humbug a bad name.

The moral to be drawn is clear,
The lesson all too stark:
Be ruled by Queen Victoria,
And do it in the dark.

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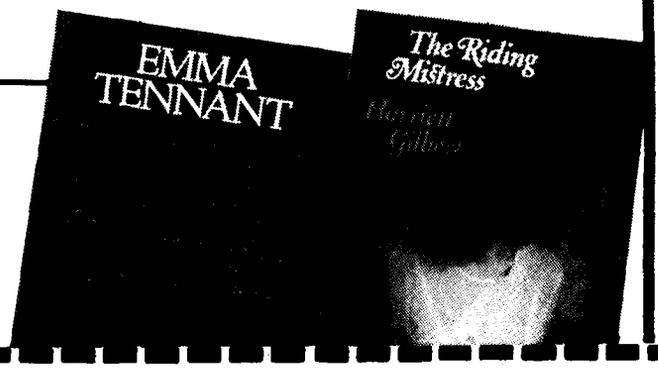

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FOREIGN NEWS: MULTINATIONALS

Seveso is Everywhere

IN 1976, an explosion at a chemical plant in Seveso, Northern Italy, spewed clouds of highly poisonous dioxin gas over the town and the neighbouring area. In 1983, waste from the accident was discovered in a disused abattoir in a French village, hidden there by a contractor who had been paid to dispose of it and had failed to do so. Meanwhile executives of the Swiss-owned firm responsible for the plant finally stood trial for their negligence during the original accident. The repercussions of Seveso, it seems, will be with us for some time to come. Those repercussions reach out to almost every area of political concern – industrial, military, ecological, religious, domestic . . . A group of feminists in Geneva described some of the links in a booklet, part of which is included in Reclaim the Earth*, a book of essays published this weekend to coincide with a 'Reclaim the Earth' weekend at County Hall, London. Below, we publish an extract, translated by Frances Howard-Gordon.*

THE COMPANY behind the Seveso accident, Icmesa, was producing, among other things, the defoliants destined for use in Vietnam: used by those self-same Americans who today refuse to say what remedies there might be for the terrible diseases resulting from dioxin. This information is classified – a military secret.

After this, how can anyone dare say that the battle-zone and the factory are the affairs of men? We do not need Seveso to tell us that it is *our* business, and it is precisely because we still have so little power that war and industry can go on developing in this way. From Vietnam to Seveso, from Malville to Geneva, the 'powers that be' are attacking our lives with a motivation that is utterly alien to us. How can we find a response which measures up to this? How can we come together to act?

10 July 1976: A 'toxic cloud' escapes from the Icmesa factory.

14 July 1976: 'Flowers and plants within a radius of several kilometres dry up. The animals begin to die. The children start showing symptoms like 'nettle rash'. These are the first known effects of the poison cloud. The children are therefore the first to be physically affected, the first to cry because they feel pain. They are also the first to have to undergo medical examinations, doubly odious because no one knows how to take away the pain, because the role of guinea pig becomes all too apparent at Seveso.

No need to tell the women what even one ill child, let alone several, means in terms of worry and overwork (visits to the doctor, special care, hospital examinations, etc.). Especially when one knows that the inhabitants of zones contaminated by the toxic cloud or exposed to the risk of dioxin poisoning will be *kept* under medical control for a period of *at least five years*.

24 July 1976: A 35-year-old Seveso woman, Maria Galli, dies suddenly at Cortina D'Ampezzo. She worked there as a housekeeper for an industrialist from Como. Every morning she would return, crossing the most seriously affected zone around the Icmesa factory on foot. Thus, on the morning and evening of 10 July, just as in the days that followed, Maria Galli was breathing in toxic substances, even though her home was 'only' in Zone B. The doctor who performs the post mortem at first refuses to say anything publicly. Then it is decided that the cause of death is an attack of bronchial asthma, an ailment from which she had apparently been suffering for some time.

Camera Press

Chloracne victim: no known cure

Towards the end of July, people start talking about the risks of deformities to the babies still in their mothers' wombs. The doctors therefore declare that everyone must abstain from conceiving and avoid pregnancy for at least three months. The question of abortion arises. It is conceded that therapeutic abortions should be allowed to pregnant women from the most contaminated zone. It is Andreotti, President of the Council, who personally authorises the abortions, reserving the right of approval to a commission composed of two gynaecologists and one psychiatrist. The gaining of abortions is therefore made highly technical and bureaucratic, and the women – who, alone, are the ones who have to carry personal responsibility for interrupting their pregnancies – are left to face extra humiliation.

9 August 1976: The Archbishop of Milan speaks out against the 'panic' abortions at Seveso: 'If the women who are "bad Christians" do not want to look after deformed children, we will find "good Christian families" who will.'

At a special dispensary opened at the Desio hospital, a woman confronts the psychiatrist, saying: 'But what if I give birth to a deformed child?' The psychiatrist replied: 'Come now madam, don't you know that abormal children are often happier than other children?'

29 August 1976: A Seveso woman gives birth to a dead child without a brain. Doctors declare that dioxin has nothing to do with it. Any woman who wants a legal abortion has to go through unbelievable tribulations. Everyone attacks her with their political beliefs and tries to con her on the theme of abortion. She goes through interminable trials, since weeks go by between the moment of decision and the possibility of actually having an abortion. She experiences great pain. This is why some women have preferred to sort the matter out by themselves or have gone directly to an abortionist.

This is how Maria Chinni died. Several months pregnant and living in the contaminated Desio zone, she did not go to the dispensary with its reactionary gynaecologists. Maria was the sole breadwinner for herself, her sick husband and two children. She tried to induce an abortion by swallowing a substance which was supposed to poison the foetus. Dreading the legal consequences of her action, like all the women in her situation, she was only taken to hospital when already in a coma.

14 September 1976: The conference of Italian bishops officially condemns 'the dioxin abortions'.

29 September 1976: We learn that certain women from Desio, Seveso, Cesano Maderno have had abortions in Switzerland (Tessin and Geneva) in order to escape the anti-abortionist prohibitions of Italian doctors. In effect, out of 1,500 pregnant women in the contaminated zone, 730 were examined at the dispensary, 150 asked for abortions and only 25 managed to get them.

We, as feminists, have a long discussion about how to approach the local women, given that they live according to strict cultural conditions (e.g. very tied to the church, family, etc.). It seems to us that, despite our differences, it should be possible for us all, simply as women, to understand each other immediately on some matters.

WHEN AN 'ACCIDENT' occurs, like the one at Seveso or the Morhange talcum powder incident, we are expected to believe that it is an isolated incident, a mistake.

*Reclaim the Earth, *edited by Leonie Caldecott and Stephanie Leland, Women's Press £4.95.*

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Obviously that is wrong. As things are, it is impossible for accidents *not* to happen *all* of the time.

The whole of industry, all the multinationals, functions in the following way: they try to find out, through market research and other studies, which products will be the most saleable. As a result, new products are created. A series of quick experiments and summary studies are done and then the new substance is launched. It is only when many people have consumed this product (we are only guinea-pigs for big business!), when reactions are evident in a large number of people or when people actually die as a result that things can no longer be kept secret and the summary studies are taken out of the drawer. Only then are similar, but less outrageous, 'accidents' remembered and only then is consideration finally given to the idea of restrictions and, if reactions are really serious, to a ban. It is the same for everything: additives in food, medicines, cosmetics, toiletries, insecticides, textiles.

Hexachlorophine is made, among other places, at Vernier. It is contained in the most common household and domestic products: in talcum powders as well as soaps; in the boric talcs; in various shampoos; in medications, including antiseptics; in many other soaps, shampoos, vaginal deodorants, etc. (especially those called 'antiseptic'); in tampons, toothpastes and mouth disinfectants; in detergents and in certain, so-called 'sanitised' clothes. It is also used as an authorised additive in food and animal drink, as well as for the treatment of these animals, and is equally authorised in food prepared for human consumption.

To believe the publicity from Givaudan, and the others, you have to believe that beauty lays the world at your feet. A 'pretty' appearance is a guarantee of success with men and a successful social life. To be beautiful (and dumb) is the most important thing expected (and allowed) of us. Beauty, maternity, housework!

Western society has succeeded, backed by dollars, in imposing its model of beauty on the rest of the world. They want us all to be tall, long, white, supple, slim, perpetually young and charming. But how can we keep a fresh complexion when we are surrounded by pollution? How can we be smiling and accepting when our existence is ravaged by such a multitude of tensions? How can we stay eternally young when we work and motherhood ages us and . . . inexorably time passes?

THE STORY of Seveso is true even if it is dreadful. It poses brutally the question of our (failing) power, of the usefulness and effectiveness of our struggles, of our discussions, of our existence as a women's movement. In fact, we are only grasping one part of the hurt done to us by the state and industrialists.

But how can we increase our numbers, become stronger and more active? The alternatives we have been proposing now for several years have become far more serious in the light of what happened at Seveso and what it made us discover about medications and food. The booklets we have produced on 'abortions and contraception', on 'self-help', and the next on 'childcare', can become a real help and a way to escape from all those passionately interested in our health, such as doctors, chemists and big business.

What is more difficult is to organise ourselves in such a way as to prevent this destruction. We need to force the closure of places which endanger the female and male employees or which pollute the environment. *We need first to destroy what is destroying us.*

For the moment they frighten us, and not the other way round. We intrigue them perhaps, we sometimes make them argue, but we do not frighten them. In other words, we have not enough power. That is why a women's centre is an indispensable instrument for us, in order to become stronger and more numerous. We should think about controlling our bodies in a more global way, as it is not only men and doctors who behave aggressively towards our bodies, but also the multinationals. What worse aggression against the body of women, against the children of women than that of a La Roche-Givaudan at Seveso? From 10 July 1976, their entire lives have been taken over by the 'accident', and the effects are going to last a long time.

The story of Seveso shows clearly that it is either them or us who direct our affairs, and if it is not us, then the world becomes hell. It is a question of power over our own lives or their domination by others. □

WEST GERMANY

Tactical problems

Tony Paterson on strains in the peace movement

Bonn

DISPLAYING a banner with the slogan 'Freedom is not Begged for but Fought for', some 150 irate West German anti-nuclear campaigners recently blockaded a public hall where a rival peace group had planned to meet with police to discuss non-violent protest.

The meeting had been called by predominantly Protestant church peace activists in the town of Loccum to discuss the movement's campaign of opposition to the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles. It never took place. After two hours of angry exchanges between the two groups of peace activists, during which the blockaders wrecked the hall's loudspeaker system and physically removed the invited police chief, the meeting was abandoned.

The incident was an example of the divisions now opening up in West Germany's

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peace movement, as the deployment date for US missiles approaches without any sign of an agreement being reached on intermediate range missile reduction at the Soviet-American arms negotiations in Geneva.

While one section of the peace movement remains committed to non-violence at all costs and does not view the police as its opponent, another growing section of the movement is beginning to justify violence as a legitimate weapon against the 'greater' crime of missile deployment.

The peace movement has announced a week of action beginning on 15 October, when it hopes more than one million people will take part in a series of blockades of US military bases thought to be future missile sites, in countrywide peace demonstrations and in rallies. Initially, the peace movement was at pains to stress that these demonstrations would be peaceful, but the effectiveness of non-violent protest is now being seriously questioned, mainly because it has attracted insufficient publicity.

A group of peace campaigners spent the best part of a month training themselves in 'non-violent resistance' techniques before initiating a 5,000-strong anti-nuclear protest – billed as a test run for the larger autumn protests – at Mutlangen US army base last month. Despite the presence at Mutlangen of American Freeze campaigners and such well known West German authors as Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass, the blockade was viewed largely as a failure. American troops withdrew from the base and made no attempt to break the sit-down blockades around its circumference, while a skeleton force of police paraded up and down, flowers in lapels for the benefit of photographers, and chatted to the protesters.

A number of activists at Mutlangen, including anti-nuclear Greens party leader Petra Kelly, favoured intensifying the blockade and even breaking through the barbed wire fence surrounding the base, but the idea was discouraged by church and German Communist Party members in the movement.

Since Mutlangen, the Greens – who have been increasingly worried about becoming simply another 'establishment' political party since they entered parliament eight months ago – have toughened their line of opposition to missiles deployment, in a bid to retain support from those who see the party as a predominantly extra-parliamentary force. Greens National Executive Committee member, Rainer Trämpert, has publicly called on protesters to take the law into their own hands, if necessary, by breaking into future missile sites and occupying them. 'If we accept that a limited nuclear war is likely as a result of Pershing II, then we cannot be stopped by traffic fines,' he said.

But, by becoming more radical in their opposition to the missiles, the Greens and their supporters within the peace movement are running the risk of becoming identified, in the eyes of the government, with the handful of extremist groups in West Germany that are prepared to use bombs to counter deployment. Although Interior Minister Friedrich Zimmermann admits that the extremists probably make up only one per cent of the entire peace movement, his ministry has gone out of its way to underline the threat posed by this group.

A recent article in *Der Spiegel* magazine, based on Interior Ministry sources, estimated that over 700 autonomous anti-nuclear groups planned widespread violence during the October anti-missiles campaign. The report claimed that some of the autonomous groups were linked to the 'revolutionary cells' terrorist organisation that has claimed responsibility for a number of bomb attacks on US army property this year.

The autonomous groups have been blamed for an embarrassing stone throwing incident that took place last July, when the motorcade of the American Vice-President, George Bush, was pelted with cobblestones while he was visiting the town of Krefeld to underline German-American friendship. Zimmermann has used the attack to enact measures restricting the rights of demonstrators and has since declared that all blockades of US military bases are in themselves 'acts of violence'.

But, despite government efforts to prove otherwise, opposition to the planned missile deployment appears to be gaining strength. Recent opinion polls suggest that there is a majority of between 60 and 75 per cent against further deployment of US missiles if no agreement is reached at Geneva.

While an anti-missiles group has formed within Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Party, nine out of eleven regional Social Democratic Party conferences have so far declared their opposition to deployment. □

POLAND

Nobel embarrassment

Gary Mead reflects on Walesa's award

IT SEEMS THAT nothing can happen in Poland without paradox. Lech Walesa – 'the obscure electrician from Gdansk' as papers like to refer to him – has been awarded this year's Peace Prize, worth roughly £130,000. First, of course, the award was announced as the Polish regime was claiming that Walesa is salting away large sums of hard currency. But only Neal Ascherson, in a Radio 4 interview, made the point that there is something distinctly ironic in giving the prize to a candidate who, despite his best intentions, kept Poland very far from peace for nearly two years.

Walesa will donate the cash to a Church fund for private farming. This, too, is not without irony, since the fund is designed to correct the market imbalances resulting from successive regimes' starvation of private farming over at least a decade.

Poland depends heavily on private agriculture, over 80 per cent of land being privately owned. Moreover, this fund is jointly overseen by Church and state. Still, as the money first has to go into the state funds, and be taxed, and Solidarity no longer legally exists, there's not much else that Walesa could have done with the cash.

The Walesa award overjoyed anti-Jaruzelski Poles (i.e. just about everybody) but its importance lies neither in the money, nor in the public protection that it offers to Walesa himself – by confirming him as an international personality whose jailing would outrage influential opinion everywhere. The most important repercussion from the prize is that, having finally marked out Walesa and his movement for international prestige (which even the Polish regime reluctantly recognises), Western public opinion is re-focused on the fate of the 11 advisers and Solidarity leaders still in jail, and waiting to be tried on serious charges.

Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Zbigniew Romaszewski and Henryk Wujec are charged with actions preparing to overthrow the state by force. The Solidarity Seven are charged with organising a coup against the state – an up-grading of the seriousness of the charge against them, from 'preparing' a coup (as in the case of Kuron et al) to actually organising a coup.

The seven Solidarity leaders, from Szczecin (Marian Jurczyk), Gdansk (Andrzej Gwiazda), Warsaw (Seweryn Jaworski), Wroclaw (Karol Modzelewski), Bydgoszcz (Jan Rulewski) and Lodz (Grzegorz Palka and Andrzej Rozplochowski) were all elected leaders of regional Solidarity boards and are guiltless of any crime under the criminal code of pre-martial law days.

The fact that Walesa has been so distinguished should be something of a lever against the Polish state's absurd prosecution of these 11 Solidarity personalities. Even though the Peace Prize is dismissed by Jaruzelski's government as a 'political' award – and despite the award, in recent years, having gone to some fairly dubious characters – the Polish state is unable to brush aside the implications of its relentless hounding of leading supporters of Solidarity. They will be standing trial for nothing more than Walesa – and ten million others – said and did. □

THIS ENGLAND

£3 book tokens for entries printed (on postcards, please).

☐ Fifth form boys at a comprehensive school kept a league table of the number of beatings they were given. They each put 10p in a kitty at the beginning of each week. Whoever topped the league on Friday pocketed the cash. – *Daily Telegraph* (Russell Holmes)

☐ Fiddles at work, whether it be stealing office pens or letting the company pay for a mistress's flat, do nothing but good, says Dr Gerald Mars, a Cambridge sociologist. It increases job satisfaction, raises work rates and leads to greater economic production, he says. – *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

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MOZAMBIQUE

Practical politics

Suzanne Cronje examines the motives behind the state visit

FROM RECENT remarks which Prime Minister Thatcher has dropped, the state visit to Britain next week by President Samora Machel of Mozambique could mark an important change in the emphasis of policy towards southern Africa.

The relationship between Britain and Mozambique has been a complex one since 1974, when the victorious liberation movement, FRELIMO, came to power – an event which marked the beginning of the end for Ian Smith's Rhodesia. For FRELIMO was then in a position to give support to its close ally, Robert Mugabe's ZANU.

In an attempt to defeat ZANU, Rhodesia's security forces sent a fifth column into Mozambique – the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), which was and still is made up of disgruntled Portuguese settlers and their local allies. Its aim was to overthrow the FRELIMO government, or, at least, to undermine it by damaging the economy. The MNR is still at it, except that, when ZANU became the legal government of Zimbabwe in 1980, it exchanged patrons. It is now supported by Pretoria. (One of its top commanders, Orlando Cristina, was shot dead on his South African farm in April.)

The advent of majority rule in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe represents the same threat to South Africa as FRELIMO's takeover in Maputo did to Rhodesia. In their attempts to avert the threat, the leaders of South Africa's white minority are fully prepared to destroy all their neighbours to the North. They have made a good start through direct military attack, economic pressure and the use of the MNR. The situation has been made worse by the most severe drought in Mozambique's history. President Samora Machel's European tour is an attempt to secure not only development aid, but an acceptance by South Africa's allies that the destabilisation of the subcontinent on which Pretoria has embarked could lead to a major war in southern Africa.

The possibility of such a flare-up is real: after the South African air raid on Maputo in May, Soviet warships arrived off the Mozambiquan coast. The South African attack was supposed to have been directed against a major African National Congress (ANC) base; in the event, it hit a jam factory and killed some civilians. Britain's ambassador in Maputo, John Stewart, was specific in his account, which confirmed foreign press reports: 'When the diplomatic corps visited the sites attacked, and particularly the Somopol (jam) factory, I looked everywhere. The conclusion that I drew is that the factory is not, and there is no indication that it has ever been, a military installation of the ANC'. (The South African Ambassador in London retorted that Stewart was 'the victim of manipulated evidence'.)

But the damage done by the MNR to the Mozambiquan economy is far more serious. As a letter to the *New Statesman* from Maputo recently pointed out, 'Over the past several years, South African-backed rebels in Mozambique and Angola have machine-gunned trains, attacked buses and burned people alive in cars. The equivalent of several jumbo jet loads of people have been massacred in this way' (*NS* 30 September 1983). Yet there have been neither Western calls for sanctions against South Africa, nor mass protests – as happened over the shooting down of the Korean airliner.

That Pretoria organises the MNR has been publicly admitted by MNR prisoners and proved by the identification of white officers killed on sabotage missions in Mozambique. Even the US State Department has said that the MNR 'receives the bulk of its support from South Africa'. This confirmation of what Maputo has so long asserted, without ever being taken seriously by the rest of the non-African world, helped to produce a rapprochement with Washington. Mr Peter de Vos, a career diplomat, was recently named US Ambassador to Mozambique – after two years of chilly relations.

THE DECISION by Maputo to join the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states associated with the EEC in the Lomé treaty will also help to channel development funds to Mozambique. As the targets chosen by the MNR show, Mozambique's ports, railways, roads and the famous Lonrho-owned oil pipeline from the port of Beira to Zimbabwe, make it pivotal to communications in the subcontinent – particularly for landlocked countries such as Zimbabwe and Malawi. This is why Maputo has become the headquarters of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) Transport Commission. The SADCC's nine southern and central African members have agreed to cooperate to lessen their economic dependence on Pretoria. Machel has been assured by the EEC Commission in Brussels that ACP membership will be a major boost for the SADCC in making Mozambique eligible for development assistance.

This may be linked to a new aid scheme that Britain is preparing to announce while Machel is here. The Overseas Development Administration (ODA), which handles our pitiful aid budget, has been dropping hints for some time now about an impending scheme. Our aid to Mozambique since independence has consisted largely of two small power stations in Cabo Delgado Province – total cost £5.9 million. One of them, at Quelimane, has been completed, while the Pemba one is about to be built. They were financed out of a £10 million interest-free loan signed in 1977. Dame Judith Hart, the then Overseas Development Minister, was ferociously attacked by some Tories in Parliament for this generosity to the Marxist-Leninist government in Maputo. It had to be pointed out that Mozambique had suffered considerable economic damage because of the internationally unacceptable behaviour of Her Majesty's rebellious subject, Ian Smith. It could hardly be called full compensation, but perhaps Mrs Thatcher will put matters right next week.

Machel is in fact one of Mrs Thatcher's few African admirers. After the Lancaster House agreement on Zimbabwe in 1980, he is supposed to have said triumphantly, 'Margaret Thatcher is the best Prime Minister Britain has had in 15 years,' and he is reported to have confided in President Eanes of Portugal: 'If I had a daughter I would name her Margaret.'

This may be apocryphal, but there are now signs that Mozambique may get support of a kind which will upset Pretoria – including arms. Mozambique's army, which, in the FRELIMO days, was good at guerrilla warfare in the bush, has now become too rigid, too bogged down with Soviet weaponry and cumbersome methods to deal effectively with the MNR. Maputo has therefore been trying – so far without success – to shop in the West for more suitable equipment. A recent Thatcher statement, which has not received much attention because it was buried in an exchange of letters with Tory MP Ian Lloyd (the promoter of sports with South Africa) indicates that the Prime Minister thinks that it would be wrong for Britain to dissociate itself from measures adopted by the international community to show disapproval of apartheid. (South African Foreign Minister 'Pik' Botha described her remark that, since South Africa claimed to be part of the West, it should expect to be judged by Western standards, as 'unacceptably racialistic'.)

Even more significant was her expressed concern that the frontline states today secure the great bulk of their weaponry from the Soviet Union and its allies. 'It is these opportunities for communist involvement and meddling in African affairs that I see as the most worrying aspect of the escalation of tension in the southern Africa region, *the underlying cause of which is the internal situation in South Africa itself.*' (My emphasis.)

No wonder that South Africa's Prime Minster, P. W. Botha, confessed to being unhappy about these sentiments. □

SOMETHING YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT

The pressures of modern life tend to distract our attention from fundamental realities. There is a spiritual basis to life which many of us are now ignoring at the cost of our happiness and security. There are some eternal verities behind the teachings of all religions. In your own interest, learn something about these from THEOSOPHY, the Ageless Wisdom Religion.

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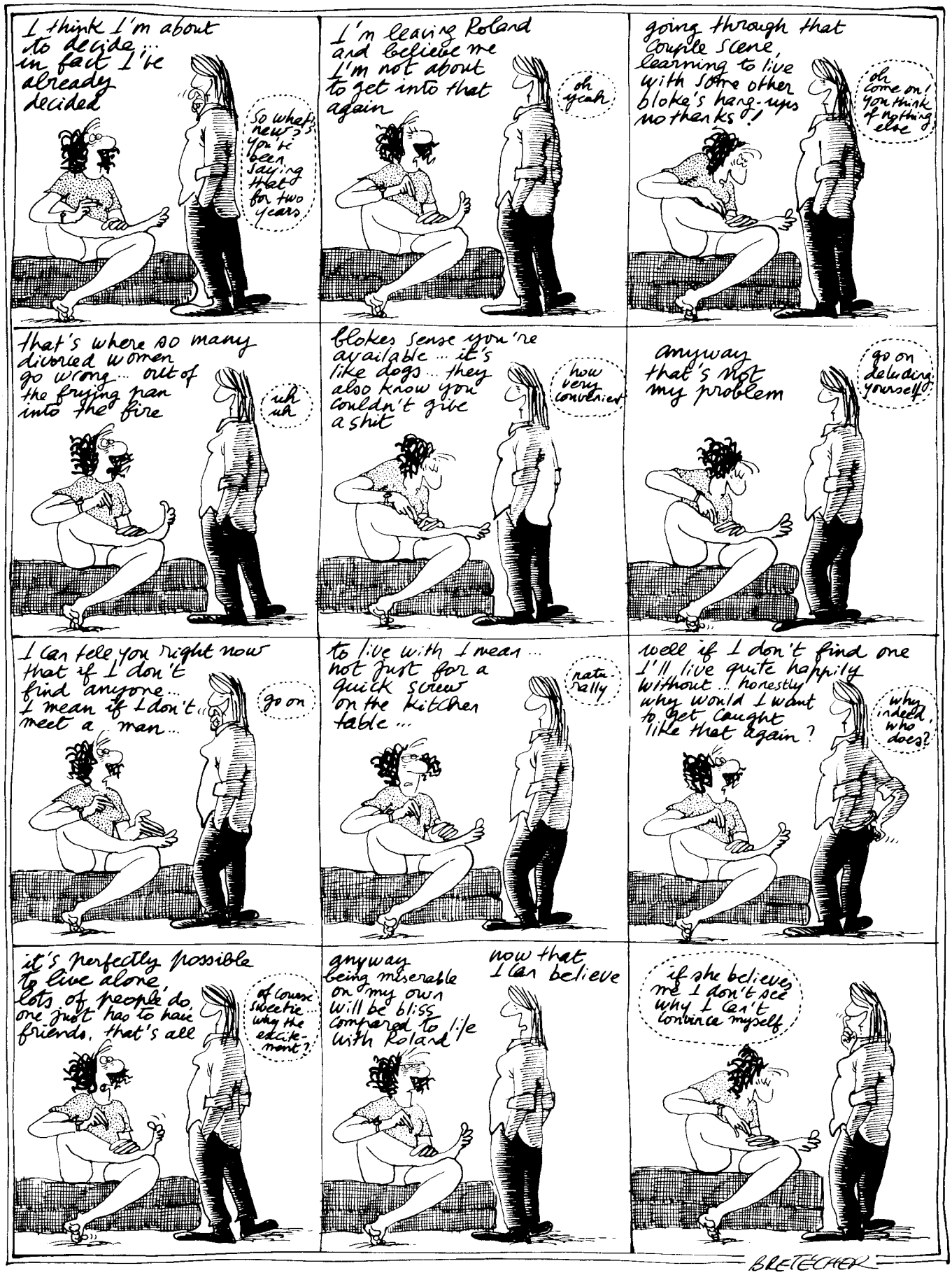
BRETECHER

TRUTH GAMES


I think I'm about to decide... in fact I've already decided
So what's new? You've been saying that for two years
I'm leaving Roland and believe me I'm not about to get into that again
oh yeah
going through that couple scene, learning to live with some other bloke's hang-ups no thanks!
oh come on! You think of nothing else
that's where so many divorced women go wrong... out of the frying pan into the fire
uh uh
Blokes sense you're available... it's like dogs... they also know you couldn't give a shit
how very convenient
anyway that's not my problem
go on deluding yourself
I can tell you right now that if I don't find anyone... I mean if I don't meet a man...
go on
to live with I mean... not just for a quick screw on the kitchen table...
naturally
well if I don't find one I'll live quite happily without... honestly why would I want to get caught like that again?
why indeed, who does?
it's perfectly possible to live alone, lots of people do, one just has to have friends, that's all
of course sweetie... why the excitement?
anyway being miserable on my own will be bliss compared to life with Roland
now that I can believe
if she believes me I don't see why I can't convince myself
BRETECHER

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LETTERS

Crime waves

Max Farrar, Leeds 8

Jock Young is clearly trying to become an architect of the 'new realist' Labour strategy on crime and, judging by the frequency of his printed utterances on the subject, has no shortage of admirers in the labourist publications. Richard Kinsey, with none of Jock Young's ultra-left baggage to dispose of, seems to be hitching a ride on the same horse.

Its not my business to try and influence Labour policy, but I work in an inner-city Law Centre and I have a close interest in the problems that Young and Kinsey discuss in their article 'Life and crimes' (*NS* 7 October). Before their ideas become the conventional wisdom, I'd like to question how 'realistic' they are.

First, what do they mean by suggesting that 'law and order . . . should be a necessary social provision for the poor'? Are the police to become part of the welfare state in Neil Kinnock's socialist Britain? It is ironic that they propose this at a time when Newman is actually trying to discard the few vestigial socially responsible parts of policing onto the social workers and company. Their patronising 'quite so' to the suggestion, at the Hackney Police Committee, that police crime is an important issue makes me wonder if their next idea is going to be that the police really are not as bad as they are made out to be, that Kinnock could easily turn them into social workers with a little (socially responsible) muscle.

Secondly, what do Young and Kinsey actually know about the inner city? They talk about connecting 'with the immediate experience of working class life' and then refer to working class women having their rent nicked. In our inner city most people don't get their rent any more: they are on Supplementary Benefit and it's paid direct under the Housing Benefit Scheme. Very few people have gas or electricity meters, either. Most importantly, Young and Kinsey are conjuring up a left-wing version of the mugging myth. They even use the police code word 'street crime'. In almost four years of Law Centre work, and a total of 12 years in this area, I have only known of one 'mugging' spasm in the area – and each of the three victims was a white punter. Local people in our area are not 'mugged'.

Thirdly, their proposed alliances are as Utopian as their hope that the police are reformable. The first round of feminist campaigning against male violence in Leeds actually began with white feminists using our (largely black) inner city area as the starting point for its torch-light march. They seemed unable to understand the attack on black men implied by this action. When a small multi-racial group ventured from our area into the lands of the middle class and 'upwardly mobile' working-class campaigners against lorries and road improvement schemes, it was berated for playing reggae on its portable cassette player – and this was at a food and culture festival!

Finally, it has to be remarked that Young and Kinsey criticise un-named members of the Labour Right and Left – the only person they actually point their fingers at is Paul Gilroy. There is no doubt that there is an important debate to be had about crime and inner city life. Gilroy is one of a tiny number of black writers who are making a real contribution to developing socialist thought in this area. Nothing can be gained by vindicitive, highly personalised caricatures like those of Young and Kinsey.

Caroline Wright, London E5

I approached the article by Young and Kinsey on crime (*NS* 7 October) with interest, having spent several months researching the whole subject of violence against women, something avoided wholesale by male Left writers.

Leaving aside their more extraordinary proposals, such as linking crime to pollution, I was amazed at their dismissal of one of the few people on the Left who has tackled the issues head on. Anyone reading Paul Gilroy's piece in *Socialist Register* will find that, far from minimising the effects of crime and violence for working-class people, he actually presents a serious analysis of the police, racism and the role of the media – but first questioning why law and order should be such a central issue today.

Young and Kinsey characterised this argument as some loony leftie nonsense, and then proceeded without mentioning the police or racism at all. They seem perfectly at home with the Tory definition of crime as something working-class people do to each other, and nowhere is there any hint that race or gender make any difference to people's experiences, or that people have conflicting expectations of the police. Racist attacks against black people, or rape and sexual offences against women are reduced to a consequence of employment and vandalism.

Before swallowing such a vision of realism as offered by Young and Kinsey, socialists would be advised to look at similar arguments used by right-wing parties in Europe, like the Centrum Prtij in Holland. Though their main platform was to call for the expulsion of foreign workers, they managed to link this with other more popular issues, such as crime, drugs control, the ecological movement, cruelty to animals and pollution.

Common ownership

Paul Derrick, London SW6

Neil Kinnock makes it clear, in the lecture that you have reprinted under the title 'My Socialism' (*NS* 7 October), that he does not believe that the present economic system is capable of overcoming its own contradictions and of providing full employment and sustained growth. Nor does he identify socialism with a reduction of inequality through redistributory taxation and an extension of welfare. But he does not tell us very much about what he *does* mean by socialism.

The Labour Party has done little to clarify the implications of its own constitution over the last 65 years. Hugh Gaitskell believed in 1960 that Labour lost in 1959 partly because thousands of voters believed the Tory story that socialism means the nationalisation of everything – even though Clause Four does not mention nationalisation. It may be that Labour would have done better in 1983 if the party had placed more emphasis on forms of common ownership other than state ownership; particularly, on cooperative ownership, which was not mentioned in *Partners in Rebuilding Britain*. This would have helped to make socialism a vote winner by identifying it with a diffusion of power among the people, instead of with a concentration of power in the hands of the State.

It would also have helped Labour to develop a more convincing economic strategy. Many voters last June did not believe that Labour would be able to reduce unemployment by two million in five years through economic expansion, but without significant inflation. Many did not believe that the proposed economic assessments about the wage increases that the nation could afford would work – especially if trade unionists were expected, as between 1975 and 1978, to accept wage increases lower than past price increases and lower than increases in profit. With more emphasis on cooperative ownership and with a legal right for workers to participate in retained company earnings through the issue of bonus shares, investment would have been partly or wholly or behalf the workers and the assessments more likely to have been accepted as equitable.

A Commission is to be appointed to explore the Labour Party's commitment to common ownership. It is to be hoped that it will pay particular attention to the relevance of extending common ownership to the task of developing a convincing economic strategy.

Only council houses

Joe Corbett, Toxteth, Liverpool

The recent correspondence from J. McBane (Letters 30 September) paints an accurate picture of the emerging style of urban management being practised by the Labour (Militant dominated) City Council.

Here in Toxteth, the City Council has recently purchased a new-build housing estate of 200-plus units (Windermere Green) 'off the shelf' from a speculative building contractor. At an asking price of around £3m, it has the following points in its favour (in so far as the City Council is concerned):

a) £3m for 200-plus houses is cheap.

b) It enables the Council to honour its electoral pledge to have 'new Council Houses' on site and ready for occupation by next May.

Unfortunately (for the future tenants), the houses are well below current public sector standards for council house building. That's why they are cheap. A local joke has it that, on the day the tenants move in, they'll be handed the keys, the rent book, and the rabbit!

Or, as the Deputy Leader of the City Council, Councillor Hatton, remarked recently when questioned about this particular scheme: 'They aren't very good, I admit, but they are Council houses'. At this rate, perhaps Militant in Liverpool should re-name themselves The Nostalgic Tendency, in keeping with their determination to revive a public sector housing strategy (Council houses and nothing else) that was tried in the '50s and '60s and failed.

Lost lines

Alan Bold, Balbirnie Burns East Cottage, nr Markinch, Glenrothes, Fife

I am currently preparing for publication an authorised edition of *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid (C. M. Grieve)* and have a problem I'm sure can be solved by the collective erudition of your readers. In a letter of 13 November 1920, to George Ogilvie, MacDiarmid quotes (without any explanation) the following lines:

> Grant it to come to me also to keep
> This small session in camp at end of day,
> To have this waking witness ere I sleep
> Of the world passed away;
> Whether dreams take me then, or heralds wait
> As singing children say;
> Or ushers of the stars, bewildering fate,
> Upon the walls of darkness: or not less
> To be desired than they
> Calmer forgetfulness!

Can any of your readers identify and place these lines?

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Paul Foot

Becoming wise

Great Cobbett: The Noblest Agitator
DANIEL GREEN *Hodder* £12.95

EVERY TORY intellectual will tell you with relish and relief that if you were not a socialist at 20, you never had a heart, and if you were not a Tory by 40, you haven't got a brain. There are, however, some awkward exceptions to the rule. William Cobbett, for instance, was a High Tory at 20, and a radical at 40. At 50, he was an extremist, and at 60 a dangerous subversive. After that, he never looked back.

The journalism of Peter Porcupine, Cobbett's pseudonym when he settled in America in the 1790s, was greatly celebrated in the British court and government. Porcupine was disgusted by the French Revolution and all its works, and even encouraged the British government to seize some of the Southern states of America to rescue them from possible French invasion. On his way back from America, therefore, Porcupine was feted by the Duke of Kent. Back in England, he dined with William Pitt, the

The High Tory and . . .

Prime Minister, and became a close friend and protégé of 'weathercock Windham', the Whig land-owner who got his nickname from his intense enthusiasm for fashionable political opinions.

In 1802, when Cobbett started his *Political Register*, Pitt, Windham and Ministers of All Talents rejoiced. How suitable that Peter Porcupine had returned to rout the Jacobins in his native land!

The cheers quickly changed to outrage. The *Register* fell out with Pitt, denounced Windham and gloried in 'France's happy revolution', 'that great revolution, that bright star'. Some of that Tory outrage has passed on down the years to Daniel Green, a former agricultural correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. Mr Green comes close to apologising on Cobbett's behalf that his conversion ever took place. Indeed, whole sections of this huge biography reassure us that perhaps the change never really happened: that Cobbett, for all his contempt for the kings of his time, was really a royalist; for all his invective against landlords and aristocrats was really devoted to hierarchy and order. Cobbett wrote:

> English country gentlemen are, I sincerely believe, the most cruel, the most unfeeling, the most brutally insolent; but I know, I can prove, I can safely take my oath, that they are the most base of all creatures that God ever suffered to disgrace the human shape.

No matter, soothes Daniel Green. He was really an English country gentleman himself. Cobbett's inconsistency, Mr Green concludes, is rather in his latter-day radicalism than in his early reaction. The former, therefore, gets more space in the biography than the latter.

Cobbett himself had a better explanation.

> You will learn [he wrote in the *Register* in 1831, when he was 68] that man grows out of darkness into light. That is what they call my inconsistency, the lying jades, when I became wise. I know now, though I did not know then, that the borough mongers wanted to beat the French to save their seats, if not their necks, and to stifle reform.

In America, Peter Porcupine wrote about politics at a distance from the people they most affected. In England, William Cobbett made contact once more with the people among whom he was born. He saw for himself how they were being starved and robbed by a system of the most breath-taking corruption. This 'knowing now what he did not know then' was translated at once into his journalism. Almost in angry reproach at his own ignorance in the past, he started to write of the aspirations and anguish of the common people, and to torment their tormentors. He broke the rules. He sold his *Register* for twopence. Consistently, over a period of 30 years, it sold tens of thousands of copies, its circulation rising at one stage to a fantastic 70,000.

His former friends in high places started by offering him money to shut up. In 1810, they sent him to prison for seditious libel for attacking flogging in the army. In 1817, the heat of persecution was so intense that Cobbett fled to America. In spite of all this, Mr Green observes, rightly, 'the older Cobbett grew, the more radical he became'. Even Parliament, which tamed so many hotheads before and since, increased his appetite for information to expose corruption and police spies. But the power of his journalism did not depend only on information. It sprang from his dedication to the cause of the poor:

> I really am ashamed to ride a fat horse, to have a full belly, and to have a clean shirt on my back while I look at these wretched countrymen of mine.

The contrast between the starving poor and the wealth of the 'tax-eaters' infuriated him. He reserved his most furious tirades for those who spoke of such conditions as 'liberty'. 'Talk of liberty indeed! Civil and religious liberty! The Inquisition with a full belly is far preferable to a state of things like this.'

Even worse than the borough mongers and the tax-eaters in his eyes were the 'shoy-

Mary Evans Picture Library

the dangerous subversive

hoys', the scarecrows of parliamentary reform who did not dupe a single predator but served only to lull the people who put them up.

Even worse than the Pitts and Castlereaghs were their friends who made grand speeches about the need to free slaves in distant lands, while they cheerfully hired wage slaves in their fields and factories. 'Wilberforce!' he bellowed to the hero of Liberal hypocrites throughout the ages. 'Wilberforce! I have you before me in a canting pamphlet.' Poor old Wilberforce could not even start to answer the merciless onslaught which followed.

Eighteen years after Cobbett's death, Karl Marx scorned him as a 'true John Bull'. He mocked Cobbett's simplistic economics and laughed out loud at his utopianism of the past. Yet, Marx concluded, William Cobbett was 'the greatest political writer of this century'. In particular, Marx revered Cobbett's 'plain broad downright English' and

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sought to copy it. He realised (as so few of his followers have done) that it is no use whatever understanding what is wrong unless you can communicate with the people with the power to change it.

Daniel Green's approach is rather different. He starts, as he ends, on the fence. 'Whenever I remember to have any political opinions', he admits, coyly, 'they are usually closer to those Cobbett held when he was a High Tory than to those he ought to have held when he was a radical.' (What fun Cobbett would have had with this. 'He that does not exercise his own judgement', he once wrote, 'is a poor, passive tool'.)

Daniel Green likes Peter Porcupine so much that he can never really come to terms with William Cobbett. He plays up the Porcupine characteristics which stayed with Cobbett always: his yearning for the Bad Old Days; his pomposity; his patriotism, which fades, as so often, into racialism; his patriarchal priggishness (*Advice to Young Men*, which is so full of conceit and bombast that it is almost unreadable, is one of Mr Green's favourites).

Meanwhile, the Cobbett who was read and loved by hundreds of thousands of industrial workers and farm labourers is held out at arm's length as though there were something rather distasteful about him. Indeed, more than once, Daniel Green finds himself in sympathy with Cobbett's prosecutors and jailers.

It is, I suppose and grudgingly admit, an extraordinary achievement of this great popular journalist that a part of him can command the affection, and the most strenuous dedication of as reactionary an author as Daniel Green. But it is, surely, the wrong part, and therefore the wrong biography. G. D. H. Cole wrote a much better one sixty years ago. □

Mike Jenkins

Orange-peel man

Small man from up the Rhymni valley,
stunted to the size
of a mining gallery.
Silver hair the shine
of a butty-can.
Walks with a limp:
no compensation.

Every other Saturday's
relegation struggle, among
moaners and masochists,
behind the tallest pine-tree fans
he stands. Shouts
at the players like a trainer.

Might as well be in blind-black
at the seam, for all he can see:
yet he knows who has the ball
(invariably the opposition!)
and flings, disgusted, orange-peel
at players who ignore his tactics,
whose wages weigh the same as him.

FICTON
Richard Deveson

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Hamish Hamilton £8.95
Berlin Game
LEN DEIGHTON *Hutchinson* £8.95
Leila
J. P. DONLEAVY *Allen Lane* £8.95

A dandiprat was a 16th-century coin worth three halfpence; by extension, it is a small, worthless person. But, although Daniel D'Arcy Pratt, the hero of David Thomson's **Dandiprat's Days,** was nicknamed 'Dandiprat' by his dotty, coin-collecting father, he is not small and worthless. True, he too dispenses odd nicknames (his siren sister Cicely is Cirencester or Cicester; his Aunt Jane, Aunt Janus); he too is rather dotty – in fact, he's not just dotty, he has three assorted doctors (Drs Psyches, Psex and Phyz) to minister to him – and is, from time to time, subject to dreadful manic-depressive breakdowns. But, in dealing with these attacks of elation and despair, he achieves, both comically and poignantly, great dignity. Correspondingly, this novel, which may sound dottily whimsical, is surely an outstanding piece of writing.

It is cast as Dandiprat's diary, recording descent into depression and take-off into hypomania. David Thomson handles beautifully the technical problem of working reliable 'factual' information among the 'mad' first-person transcriptions, while exploiting the compensating opportunity to create a remarkably distinctive character out of his own literary style. (The effect is a bit like a *Diary of a Nobody* written by Kafka.) There is no explicit thesis, but the burden of the book is that this kind of mental breakdown, while real and frightening enough, is not a chaos: experience is still suffused with value, with happiness and pain. Dandiprat will not disown the meaning in his love affair with Lucinda, a pink plastic mannequin he abducts from Harrods. (The police take her away as he's walking her up towards Hyde Park Corner.) And, as his fling with Virginia, a scatty, batty barmaid, Ruth to his Boaz, burns up into mania, he writes: 'She will lie at the feet of another Boaz and another . . . and to me in my selfishness her pregnant life will be like death.'

Darconville's Cat . . . It's impossible not to be unfair, in a review of a few hundred words, to a book of 700 long pages; so here goes. This must be one of the most hypertrophically pretentious novels to have crossed the Atlantic for a long time. (A year or two, at least.) It includes the following. A chapter in blank verse (13 pp.); a chanted unholy litany, *libera nos, Domine,* from every real and invented woman who ever destroyed a man (21 pp.); a chapter entitled 'Were There Reasons to Believe That in Quinsyburg Visionaries, Fabulists, Hilarodists, and Hermeneuts Would Suffer the Dooms, Chastisements, and Black Draughts of a Depression They Otherwise Didn't Deserve and Deteriorate Utterly?', which consists of the single word: 'Ample'; a closely printed list of a library of misogynistic books (10 pp.); diaries; a chapter in two parallel columns; a classical oration (*Exordium, Propositio,* etc, etc); more lists; every word in the English language; plus coinages. No musical notation or passages in Linear B, but Alexander Theroux obviously dropped them in the interests of compression.

This would all be much more fun if it was there for reasons other than self-display (and neurotically compulsive self-concealment), and if the ideas or action of the novel required it. But the substance is so slight. A writer (you've guessed it) comes to teach at a girls' college in the South, falls in love with the belle in English 100, will they get married, won't they, she ditches him (no wonder), he dies. Fabulation is also required, so we get a sort of black pact with a Mephistophelean projection-figure, Dr Crucifer. Though the central theme is presumably meant to be the conflict between the ideal and the real (girl as idealised by the writer-hero vs. girl as she really is), with the orgies of style dramatising and arising out of the conflict, what is actually presented is an unbearably overheated self-consciousness that doesn't achieve self-knowledge, knowledge of others, or indeed interesting thought. Do people really sit down and *read* novels like this?

People will read **Berlin Game,** and very readable it is too. Like many spy novels, it's perhaps too much about bureaucracy and the paranoia of the office; I also guessed the villain, though that was probably more luck than judgment. But the tawdry East Berlin atmosphere is expertly insinuated.

Darcy Dancer in **Leila** dilating upon developments in the doings of Darcy Dancer of *The Destinies of Darcy Dancer, Gentleman.* Darcy Dancer telling the story in the first person but forever referring to himself in the third person. J. P. Donleavy forever using present participles instead of finite verbs. Often enough neither participles nor verbs. Short sentences. And patient readers don't use commas if leaving them out will confuse the sense. And why use question marks. (Or hyphens.) Begob the whole novel going on and on and on like this.

Darcy Dancer departing Dublin, descending on his dank decrepit ducalesque demesne in deepest Ireland. Servants being idiotic or Latin-quoting or Jesus, Mary and Joseph urine sodden as the proverbial newt. Foxhunting. Rolling in cowpats. Later in Dublin Bohème brothelry bankruptcy and bouncing back. And Leila. Beautiful beyond belief. White as ivory seen in dreams, Leila, suffering, mysterious. Leila. Oh no. Oh yes. Leila going away. Gone. Leila.

And each chapter ending with A petite and/Pale and/Pathos filled/Poemlet □

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The Means Test Man

WALTER BRIERLEY *Spokesman* £3.95

In the Sixties, when the theoretical Left found great impatience with the boom-time workers of the Midlands and the South, the cry was, 'A million on the dole and the workers will get up and fight'. Such a notion could easily have been proved unsound by the experiences of the Thirties; today, of course, the evidence of our own eyes makes a sounding of just how shallow the idea was. The effects of long-term unemployment are such that resilience gives way to despair, in some cases to acceptance, and in many to grasping at political straws.

This book was first published in 1935. It was rated by the *Daily Herald* alongside *Love on the Dole* and *The Jungle*. However, while the latter two entered the proletarian hall of eternal fame, *The Means Test Man* died a death until now. Its demise was political; it was despised by the Left because it did not show any way forward. This is in a sense a criticism of the author – for not finding the class answer to the crime of boom and slump caused by capitalism. Walter Brierley, like others, wrote of his own and his fellows' situation to avoid destitution and not to save his class.

And yet a reappraisal is long overdue. The descriptions of personal relationships are moving, passionate and accurate. Although no answer is to be found here, there are evocations of alienation which even the most insensitive can feel and any agitators worth their salt can quote. The perception of the class system is as clear as crystal:

> Not that she and her family were outside the world, that was where the bitterness came in, they were penned in a small space in the world like cattle and were provided with what was thought enough for them. Thousands of harassed men, women and children were penned with them, beings with no independence, no freedom, underfed, underclothed, not trusted.

Employed people still do not know what unemployment over a long period actually means and feels like. This book, a ghost from the Thirties, describes those emotions as if it had been written this morning. Undertaken as a means of personal escape, it is a hammer of consciousness and its republication can only be of value in the struggles of this decade.

David Douglass

The Left, the Right and the Jews

W. D. RUBINSTEIN *Croom Helm* £11.95

Sociologists rarely manage to produce a scholarly work which breaks out of the tight confines of academia to contribute a stimulating argument towards a wider public debate. However, Rubinstein's attempt to puncture prevailing myths regarding the Jewish position within the political spectrum ought to force leftists of many varieties to re-examine their cherished notions of a Jewish commitment to the left.

Rubinstein's central theme is the major shift of Western Jewry's political loyalties to the right in the post-World War II period. Whereas Jews played a disproportionate role in left-wing movements prior to 1945, their post-war rise up the socio-economic ladder has altered the objective bases of their collective political interests. Voting patterns in Britain, for example, clearly reveal how the majority of Jews are consistently delivering their votes to parties of the centre and the right. In the 1980 US Presidential election, 'Carter's percentage of the Jewish vote was the lowest and Reagan's the highest of any candidates of their respective parties since 1932'. Grouping themselves around the influential Jewish monthly, *Commentary*, many American Jewish intellectuals are providing a good deal of ideological muscle for the new Cold War offensive.

Jewish disillusionment with the left-wing parties has not been based solely on class interests. The virulent hostility of large sections of the Marxist left towards Israel, coupled with the deepening state-sanctioned anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, has convinced most Jews that their ethnic identity can flourish only within Western pluralistic societies. Rubinstein draws attention, though, to the surprising parallel growth of philo-Semitism in many élitist Western milieux. As long as Jews are well represented in the élite, the author believes, political support for Israel's survival will remain strong.

Rubinstein concludes his analysis with an attack on Isaac Deutscher's concept of the 'non-Jewish Jew'. He castigates the radical Jew for failing to understand power and for attempting to transform Judaism into a 'universalistic sect' at the expense of its particularist character. While his empirical evidence is certainly impressive, his uncritical belief that Jewry's best insurance policy rests with a conservative order appears to be historically naive. If Western economies were to collapse once again, along the lines of the Great Depression of the 1930s, it is not difficult to imagine large sectors of the establishment employing anti-Semitism to obscure the failure of their own economic policies.

Barry Cohen

The Tragedy of Lebanon: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers and American Bunglers

JONATHAN RANDAL *Chatto* £9.95 & £4.95

As the Lebanese editor Georges Naccache put it in 1949, *Deux negations ne font pas une nation*. This is as much as to say that there was conflict enough in Lebanon before it became a regional cockpit. Since the immediate post-colonial period, negation and contradiction have been piled upon one another, to a point where not even blood-letting seems to make any difference. Jonathan Randal, a seasoned *Washington Post* man, knows Lebanon well and, though he has much to say against the old confessional racket which dominated the country before the first civil war, is also nostalgic for it. Easy enough to see why he takes this view; the old corruption was infinitely more spacious and charming than the venomous present.

Randal's subtitle names the forces which he blames for the unravelling of the country. The Phalange party, which is a minority or at any rate not a majority of the Maronite community, which is in turn not the majority of the Christian community, which is in turn a minority in Lebanon; the Phalange party, as I say, dreamed of a Crusader-cum-Phoenician state in the whole of Lebanon. It was supported, in this sectarian *folie de grandeur*, by Israel, which saw Lebanon not as a mosaic of peoples but as an opportunity for Balkanising the Arab world and incidentally expanding its own territory. (Randal has a good summary of the diaries of Moshe Sharett, former Prime Minister of Israel, in which this collusion is laid out very candidly.) Finally, the United States, acting as a 'disinterested' superpower, actually played the role of patron to the two factions or forces named above. At one point, describing the appalling use of American weaponry against civilian targets, Randal says that he felt ashamed of being an American. He's not the self-hating type, and the admission or exclamation is not, I think, meant lightly.

His book also takes pains to tell Lebanese history. Particularly useful is the account of the feud, in the middle of the last century, between the Maronite Christians and the Druze. This bloody episode, and the vivid way in which it survives in modern memory, must be understood in order to follow today's headlines. Read Randal, and you will see how hollow was the claim that an expulsion of the PLO would bring peace.

Read him, also, for the occasional ray of optimism. He includes vignettes and portraits of the Lebanese who rose above religious hooliganism and tried to live civilised lives. Fuad Bizri, president of the nationalised electricity company, who kept the lights on for everybody and shared power cuts without favour. Best of all, Antranik Manoogian, director of the state mental hospital, who kept going under unimaginable conditions of stress and reported that, while the world outside was going mad, his patients displayed no animosity whatever to inmates of opposing persuasions. If the State Department had contained even one Manoogian, things might have been a great deal better than they are today. As it was, the Americans tolerated the Syrian occupation, encouraged the Israeli one and armed the Phalangists in between. Now they are, in a codicil to Randal's book, actually engaged with troops there. But they still blame the Lebanese for putting them to all the trouble.

Christopher Hitchens

A Green Girl

PHYLLIS WILLMOTT *Peter Owen* £8.95

This part of Phyllis Willmott's autobiography is about *A Green Girl* because the uniform of the Roan School, Greenwich, where she was educated in the Thirties was green. She takes us up to the outbreak of war and describes the emergence of a working-class girl from her family cocoon in a south-east London suburb into the middle-class business world of the City. For those readers who were familiar with the world of Amami setting lotion, 'workman's' trains into London Bridge, Henry Hall and *Bandwagon* on the wireless, and one-and-sixpenny Knickerbocker Glories at the Corner Houses, this story will make nostalgic reading.

Mrs Willmott must have kept her diary conscientiously through those adolescent years. She is able to capture both the tiny and immense joys and sorrows of those times. She certainly writes well and her account of her best friend's death from that scourge of pre-war years, TB, and her reactions to it, is poignant. She describes the schoolgirl 'pashes' at the Roan in terms of the elaborate ritual of Courtly Love. She writes sympathetically about her relatives, friends and surroundings, and with understanding and sensitivity about the disturbances of puberty and the tempests of adolescence.

Released from the enclosed world of Roan, she entered the broader walks of the metropolis and became one of the City train-commuters who, on arrival, 'would burst out of the compartment like dried seeds from packed pods'. The new world of her first employment, *The Times Bookshop*, brought her different friends. She, and two of her young colleagues, made a close trio, 'It was almost like a love affair – not with each other but with the joy of being young and free together.' *A Green Girl* is a marvellously authentic period-piece, touching, sympathetic and humane.

Brian Martin

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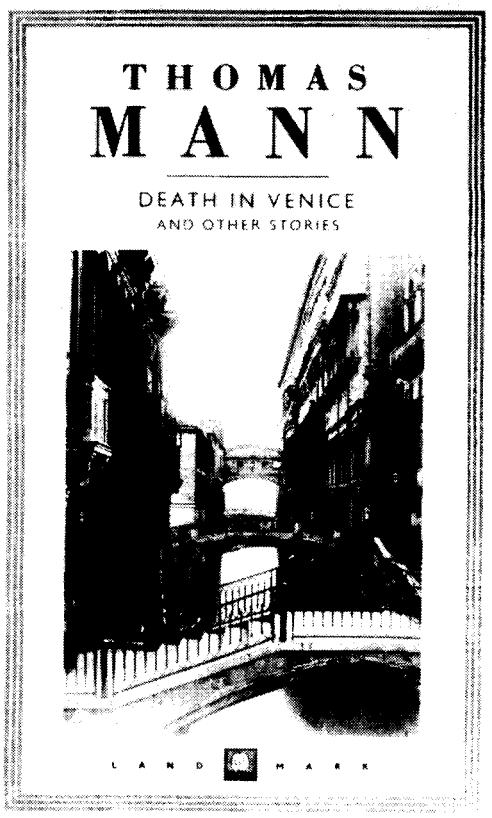

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TRAVEL
David Montrose

Inside story

The Kingdom by the Sea
PAUL THEROUX *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
Journey Home
JOHN HILLABY *Constable* £7.95

As travel becomes easier and more commonplace, travel-writers increasingly seek to emulate their vicissitude-enduring forerunners by deliberately making things difficult – slow-boating to China, bicycling from Cornwall to Caithness. Paul Theroux regards such exploits as 'travel stunts'. Cheeky, this, when his own *The Great Railway Bazaar* and *The Old Patagonian Express* fall into exactly that category. Anyway, **The Kingdom by the Sea** records something quite different: *a journey with a purpose*. Eleven years an American in London, but knowing little of the Britain beyond, Theroux determined to explore the country and to write about it as Britons have customarily written about Abroad. Eschewing sight-seeing for 'the particularities of the present', staying at guest-houses and small hotels, he travelled the entire coastline of Britain (Northern Ireland included) between May and July last year. As ever, Theroux's preferred means of transport was the stopping train. Necessity, though, compelled frequent recourse to Shanks's Pony. Many branch-lines had closed; in any case, he wanted to avoid too rapid a circuit. To emphasise that it was no stunt, Theroux bypassed dangerous places (Newry, Toxteth after dark), declined to walk through downpours ('I was no adventurer'), disdained feats of footslogging ('I was no snorting rambler').

Considered simply as an account of a trip around Britain's coastline, *The Kingdom by the Sea* is a fine book. Unfortunately, Theroux's intention was something more ambitious. Early on, he lists some British foibles – 'They wallpaper their ceilings! They put little knitted bobble-hats on their soft-boiled eggs . . .' – implicitly promising further exposures of the national character. His Dedication, indeed, evinces a belief that, 'good-humouredly and in a kind spirit', he is peddling unpalatable truths. Actually, far from embodying an outsider's perceptions, *The Kingdom by the Sea* is essentially a book of the type written by homegrown insiders since H. V. Morton's days. A superior example, maybe, but of the type. Traditionally, Theroux listens to assorted 'characters': garrulous old-timers, grasping landladies, middle-aged reps . . . He cultivates complainers. With the Falklands War in progress, followed by a rail strike, their conversation might be expected to bare the collective soul; it reveals a refreshing dearth of jingoism, but little else. Traditionally, Theroux imparts snippets of history as he proceeds, divulging where Keats corrected the proofs of 'Endymion' (Teignmouth), where Eliot stayed in Cliftonville while undergoing a nervous breakdown in 1921 (the Albemarle Hotel). This despite Theroux's assertion that Britain needed to be seen 'without literary footnotes'. He indulges in some enjoyable diatribes, but against soft targets – pet-loving, caravan parks and holiday camps, interchangeable towns – that even insiders have discerned.

Theroux's failure to carry out his intention is partly attributable to his decision, or non-decision, to let geography designate his route. The coast, during late spring and summer, geared towards tourism, hardly provides an accurate picture of Britain. Not all the answers can be found at the seaside. Visiting Dundee, Theroux comments that 'in Britain less was revealed by the lovely old town than the ugly new one'. A shame, then, that his itinerary excluded inland Thamesmead and Telford. Mainly, though, Theroux was unable to write an outsider's account because he is no longer on outsider. He possesses his own idealised Britain, and it is the insider's vision 'of a warm summer evening on a branch line train'. Theroux shares the familiar attitudes of Britons writing about Britain: a constant awareness of change for the worse, a mandarin distaste for proles and tourists ('Places in which business was bad were often especially pleasant'). He prefers the old-fashioned and the sedate, as embodied by Swanage and Scarborough; the booze and bingo ethos of Blackpool repels him. Significantly, it is Northern Ireland's unique particularities that inspire Theroux's most insightful chapters. There he really was an outsider.

In those chapters, and other scattered places, Theroux supplies, almost accidentally, a fragmentary portrait of Recession Britain. Decayed towns and tottering businesses, unemployment accepted as a permanent condition; where, due to public transport cuts, many localities are accessible only by car; where the only new railway line carries radioactive material, not passengers. Of course, sidelights on the national condition are a standard feature of the traditionalist approach, as that celebrated walker, John Hillaby, demonstrates. Tramping from Cumbria to Hampstead, Hillaby (accompanied by his wife) kept, wherever possible, to tracks and footpath, away from roads, towns, tourists. Nights were passed in a tent. Hillaby epitomises the 'footnotes' approach; every step seems to prompt a digression: scraps of autobiography, historical and literary titbits, etymologies of place-names. Yet this highly readable, wholly traditional account of a 'stunt' also comments on a declining nation. Hillaby's concern is for the native landscape, which is being destroyed by get-rich-quick farmers and a softwood-obsessed Forestry Commission. This is not the same nation Theroux saw in decline, but then there are many Britains. Hillaby's is deliberately marginal, Theroux's nearer the central facts. But any version is still way off-centre when it omits, as Theroux's does, the housing estates and tower blocks, discos and video-rentals, the Arndale Centres and pornbrokers, bridge clubs and football matches. □

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Faith Evans

Lives and soul

Out on a Limb
SHIRLEY MACLAINE *Elm Tree Books* £8.95
Swings and Roundabouts
ANGELA DOUGLAS *Elm Tree Books* £8.95

'If he's watching this', Russell Harty enquires of Shirley MacLaine, 'will he know who he is?' 'They *all* will,' she smiles. Deftly, MacLaine changes both subject and mood. Within seconds, she's flipped into a previous life as Irma La Douce, parrying vulgar quips with Harty, gigglingly joining in his ludicrous keep-fit session, wondering out loud whether the audience can see up her skirt.

MacLaine is an intuitive performer, and she is currently putting on her best show yet. All questions about 'Gerry' are answered with appropriate gravity, as though they were almost – but not quite – an impertinence. Was it, you wonder, her idea or her publisher's to capture the British market for **Out on a Limb** by casting her unidentified lover, whose 'negative energy' turned her on to the idea of reincarnation, as a Labour politician? Certainly it was a stroke of inspiration to plant a man called David Owen in the audience, the very day after Michael Foot's valedictory blasting of his former colleague. Mr Owen, a forester in a former life, explained with gentle good humour how he'd been precipitately felled by an unfriendly branch.

The 'Gerry' episodes in *Out on a Limb* are so hilarious that it would be a grave mistake to assume that the subject had been exhausted by silly-season speculation in the dailies. Nor should *NS* readers be deterred from reading this book by MacLaine's own admission to Harty that the black-eyed beast is 'a composite of several international world leaders' who 'aren't opening themselves up to the spiritual'.

With this strategic fudge, MacLaine wittingly blew what might have been a high point of the Labour Party Conference. But reading her story at the very moment when voting for the National Executive was taking place only confirmed a growing disbelief in the character's political allegiance. Do Labour MPs disapprove of *Penthouse*, eat apples whole or have Marxist wives who refuse to let them wear fur gloves in winter?

And can you hear our Neil, or for that matter our Denis or their Roy (the Ugandan chapter could come from any of MacLaine's lives, but the man's style is patrician) saying, 'See the string of lights that looks like a penis at the top? Just beyond that is my

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hotel.' or 'People need to be taught and educated with velvet-firm strokes'? No, my hunch is that lover-boy, who has made a career out of self-denial, who fails to understand why this wonderful creature fancies him, is a Tory getting his just desserts. The field narrows. It's a resolute man we're looking for, no wet in spite of a fondness for VitaBaths in conference hotel rooms. When MacLaine whips out her Polaroid, starts talking about a shared past and tells him she's writing it all down, Gerry 'disappears determinedly into the thick cold silent white Swedish night'.

The end of the affair, alas only halfway through the book, leaves MacLaine free to pursue what she describes as the spiritual dimension. She grows, shares and self-realises with all the dedication and energy she brings to her screen roles. The various mediums she consults, be they hippy-dippy Californians or Peruvian peasants receiving in Sanskrit, are remarkably well informed about her (and Gerry's) past and present lives. From now on, almost everyone MacLaine encounters turns out to be a closet cosmic believer. Only Bella Abzug, with whom MacLaine served as co-chairwoman on women's issues during McGovern's presidential campaign, offers a gentle note of scepticism ('show me the research').

For the British actress Angela Douglas and her husband Kenneth More, withdrawal from everyday life became a cruel necessity. After a triumphant comeback in *The Forsythe Saga,* More contracted Parkinson's disease, and for his few remaining years was cocooned in that very private world which the illness imposes on its victims. Reluctant to admit the truth to his adoring public, More was in the end forced to announce his retirement when a libel case against his autobiography brought him before the glare of the High Court. It's painfully ironic that the man whose considerable sex appeal lay in his clubby, stiff-upper-lip resilience should have been struck by a disease which aged him prematurely and made him unable to fend for himself.

In **Swings and Roundabouts** Angela Douglas tells the tale of their stormy but passionate relationship with the same honesty and courage which the situation demanded of her at the time, and offers some useful perceptions of the star as public property. Visiting a London hospital for tests, the Mores overhear a woman saying to her friend, 'You wouldn't think he'd let himself be seen like that, would you?'

Both Douglas and MacLaine play down their professional skills. MacLaine tells an American psychic that she's 'a performer who also writes'. Nowadays, when actors and actresses compile their memoirs, they're increasingly anxious to stress that they are human beings too, and the heartbreak and conflict are as noteworthy as the success. Perhaps stars really do know what we want, whether it's on or off the astral plane. (Memo to MacLaine, a variation on a very old English joke: when Kenneth More was dying, a friend brought him a book on Buddhism which she thought might help. After a few moments, 'he snapped it shut, and growled weakly: "Oh, bugger Buddha!" ')□

ARCHITECTURE
Jules Lubbock

Housing for need

LIVERPOOL has the worst slums in Europe. People face a choice between verminous private terraces and corporation property, one third in hard-to-let tenements or 1960s estates, one of which, Netherley, opened in 1969, is now abandoned – 1,900 flats in blocks stretching three-quarters of a mile without a single shop. No municipal housing has been built for 10 years. The waiting list is 22,000.

In desperation, some 800 low-income, working-class families have over the past six years formed 16 co-operatives to build their own houses. They are funded by the Housing Corporation or by the DOE through the local authority's Housing Investment Programme. Members own each estate collectively, without any individual share in the capital or any right to buy. Tenants pay rent to cover interest, loan repayments and maintenance.

The pioneer of this movement, with its major implications for architecture and public housing, is Weller Streets Co-op, from a slum area in Liverpool 8. In 1976 their Action Group was promised clearance by 1981, but they would have been dispersed to places like Netherley. A housing association, CDS, who had acquired the houses from a bankrupt landlord, suggested forming a co-op to rehabilitate them. Several such co-ops had appeared in the district following a Shelter campaign in the early Seventies. Also in 1976, the Labour Government had backed the approach with a DOE circular and established the Co-operative Housing Agency in the Housing Corporation.

Designed to the tenants' own specifications – a Weller Streets house

Weller Streets proved to be beyond rehabilitation, and then someone had the idea of building new homes – virtually uncharted territory in Britain. Five years later, in October 1982, the 61 families moved in. They had spent three years in tough negotiations to obtain HC funding, a site close to their old homes, and their designs. Once building began in October 1980 their fame spread throughout the city. This coincided with Liberal control of the council. The local Labour Party's accusations of queue-jumping and élitism – 'We're so élitist that we're living in slums', was Weller Streets' incredulous response – enabled the Liberals to exploit a Labour Government policy, piloted by Labour supporters. Their Housing Investment Programmes obtained DOE funding for six more co-ops: 243 homes. When Labour regained control this May, a further eight co-ops (509 homes) were blocked. Two of these (100 homes) have since been funded by the Housing Corporation.

Labour agrees that the co-op houses are excellent, but will sponsor no more beyond offering to build the remaining six as municipal housing to the co-op's own designs and allocations. They argue that Labour's new programme of 1,500 houses a year makes the co-ops unnecessary; that no funds should be diverted from rented houses allocated through the waiting list; and they also see a threat to council employment. These are responsible points. Six years ago the co-operators would have agreed. Now they believe that they have created a model for a new sector of public housing, which satisfies all Labour's criteria and overcomes the problems associated with municipal ownership.

THE DESIGN problems of municipal housing have arisen because the machinery to carry out the schemes devised by the architecture and planning profession at the turn of this century prevents architects consulting future tenants. This is no accident. We forget that these architects were inspired not by pure philanthropy, but by a terror of the working classes, whom they saw as barbarians with uncouth tastes. By resettling them in model housing estates, without pubs, a healthy workforce would be created, industrial unrest defused and foreign competition defeated.

Most architects design houses for the approval of fellow architects and critics, not for tenants. But Liverpool co-operation, whose ground rules were forged by Weller Streets and their architect Bill Halsall, has

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turned this relationship on its head. Their slogan – 'Power and control lie with the co-op' – is a declaration of working-class emancipation. Against the will of CDS, they insisted upon conducting their own interviews for an architect, whom they told, 'We will design the houses, and you will hold the pen' – which goes beyond the practice of new-build co-ops elsewhere. They did not at first realise that Bill had been looking for just this opportunity. He became so absorbed in listening that they often thought he was asleep while their arguments raged over fundamental architectural principles.*

Their answers bemused professionals who expected co-ops to offer more individual choice, not less. They voted for absolute uniformity down to the colour of front doors and access to sunlight, but with a choice of internal layout. They wanted small protective courts, each with two flats for old people undifferentiated from the rest, rather than sheltered housing. They rejected anything like 'Corpy' housing or terraces. They desired Leveller-like simplicity, with porches and communal landscaping in the courts to welcome visitors and to transform 'a barren site into an oasis'. Later co-ops have produced a fascinating variety of layouts, each of them the physical embodiment of the social values of the community – not to be judged on visual terms alone. A Liverpool co-op style is emerging – and architects, for once, are warmly regarded by tenants.

The administrative merits develop from the process of collaborative design. Social and family networks are consolidated; the members' pride in their achievement guarantees protection against vandalism; and high standards of maintenance are ensured by administrative skills and careful choice of materials. These are not élitist luxuries.

In reply to Labour criticisms the co-operators point out that the party has had six years to frame a policy for co-ops. They agree that the Council should make HIP funding conditional upon extreme housing need, and upon a high level of Council nominations for re-lets – 'Housing for Need, not for Greed' is Weller Streets' motto. The Council could set up its own co-op department, as in Islington, and make conditions for tendering. Co-ops are not a replacement for municipal rentals, but an alternative. They are not everyone's cup of tea. However, the Housing Department could learn from their methods of tenant involvement. Those co-ops that have been offered municipalisation would become the first municipal housing of their kind in Britain. But, since the offer, letters from the co-ops have not been answered, and offers of alternative housing have been made in what seems like a cynical attempt at attrition, so far without success. Meanwhile membership of one Labour Party ward jumped from 20 to 140 when members of one co-op joined with a view to changing policy.

Two systems of public housing are in conflict in Liverpool: municipal ownership, which Liverpool pioneered a century ago, and co-operativism which puts power in the hands of the people to construct their own lives. The Labour Party's last serious attempt to accommodate co-operativism did not get beyond theorising. In the early Twenties the Webbs believed consumer co-operation could make public enterprises accountable, arguing that municipalisation had its very origin as a kind of co-operative of ratepayers. In Russia, however, Lenin advocated co-operatives as a transition to collective socialism, and many were formed in housing, agriculture and distribution. Since the War, both housing and trades union building co-operatives have flourished in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.

Labour's 1976 circular aimed at encouraging some modest experiments which could then be monitored. The Liverpool movement has exceeded all expectations. Above all it has invented detailed procedures for others to use. But it cannot proceed or spread elsewhere until the political problems are resolved. It is the job of the Labour Party's NEC to set up a working party on which the real experts, the Liverpool pioneers, should be represented. Unless Labour can provide a framework to satisfy the aspirations of working-class people which it inspired in the first place, how can it hope to retain their support? Meanwhile the six co-ops should suffer no more delay. If Lenin saw a role for co-ops, so surely can the Liverpool Labour Party. □

*A. McDonald, The Weller Way, unpub. mss ©Weller Streets Publishing Co. 1983.

ART
John Spurling

Catch 1922

Art of the Avant-Garde in Russia: Selections from the George Costakis Collection
RA
The 1st Russian Show
Annely Juda, 11 Tottenham Mews, London W1

'Down with art, Long live agitational propaganda,' reads the inscription on one of the designs for Propaganda Kiosks made by Gustav Klucis in 1922. It sounds like a call to advance, but it was really the beginning of a retreat. 'Gustav intends to rebuild the world and the universe,' wrote his wife in her diary the same year: that was the scale by which the Russian avant-garde artists measured themselves in the early years of the Revolution. Sixty years on, Russian Constructivism is thought of as just another European regional art movement in the wake of Futurism and Vorticism, Cubism and Dadaism. At the time, although many of the Russians were deeply indebted to foreign -isms, theirs was something altogether different – different even from the Constructivism promoted in the West by Russian emigrés such as Naum Gabo and El Lissitzky. Christina Lodder ends her authoritative new book on *Russian Constructivism* (Yale, £30) with a quotation from Aleksei Gan:

> In the West Constructivism fraternises with art . . . Our Constructivism is aggressive and uncompromising: it wages a severe battle with parasites, with left and right painters, in a word with all, who even slightly defend the speculative aesthetic activity of art. Our Constructivism is fighting for the intellectual and material production of a communist culture.

The battle, which Dr Lodder traces in painstaking and fascinating detail, was decisively lost. The artists themselves kept splitting into factions, the authorities were unsympathetic, the old academic realists swept back into positions of influence, the public remained uncomprehending. Art as the inventor and maker of a brand new world manifested itself first in the designs for monuments, buildings and structures which were mostly never built, then settled for book-jackets, posters, photo-montages (a compromise with realism), furniture, textiles, stage-sets and other adjuncts to the revolutionary state, and finally, by the early Thirties, expired. In the familiar, simplified version of the story this art that was more than art was suppressed by Stalin and Socialist Realism; in truth it succumbed to its own intrinsic unreality, its doubly crazy notion that a utopia was coming into being in Russia and that at the core of such a utopia would be the fervent experimentalism of its artists.

To contemplate what survives from this extravagant dream is to be filled with a sense of pathos and irony. Shelley's Ozymandias, that exemplary monument to the past, at least consisted of two very big stone legs, a shattered visage and a pedestal; the Russians' monuments to the future are mostly rather small and two-dimensional, wisps and scraps of art and design which, for all their dynamic diagonals, curves and sharp edges, their allusions to infinite space and their bold abstraction from both organic and machine forms, remain hardly more than hints and intimations of what might follow. Many key works have disappeared entirely and can only be guessed at from grotty photographs or models reconstituted from photographs.

Even the grandest flights of revolutionary imagination – Matyushin's idea of extending the field of human vision to 360°, Khlebnikov's universal language of sounds, Tatlin's flying bicycle – now appear like the comic eccentricities of a Professor Branestawm. It is as if the Italian Renaissance had collapsed back into the Middle Ages early in the 15th century.

The irony is compounded by two current exhibitions. George Costakis is a Greek, born in Moscow in 1912, who lived through the Revolution and its Soviet aftermath until 1977, when he emerged into the West bringing with him some 1,200 items of Russian revolutionary art, but leaving four times as many behind him as a gift to the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow. In the 30 years since the Second World War, when he first started to search out these works and fill his Moscow

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flat with them, he had almost single-handedly saved the remnants of the aborted Russian Renaissance from oblivion. The selection from Costakis's collection now at the RA is comprehensive enough to provide visual evidence for much of Dr Lodder's narrative but it goes nowhere near vindicating the soaring ambitions behind the story and, with the exception of Rodchenko's *Oval Hanging Construction* and a wingstrut from Tatlin's flying bicycle, it is overwhelmingly two-dimensional. If you went there without reading the fine fat catalogue or Dr Lodder's book, you might think you were catching up with just another regional -ism from the early 20th century.

The exhibition at the Annely Juda gallery commemorates the occasion in Berlin in 1922 when the new Russian art was first shown to the West. Although very few of the original works are present, many of the best-known artists who took part are represented and another chunky catalogue charts the political and artistic turmoil behind the show. Yet again irony intervenes. It was precisely this Berlin exhibition which established the Western 'aesthetic' view of Constructivism.

So there you have it. Catch 1922. Anti-aesthetic artists who aspire to be good revolutionary collectivists and usher in a new world will end up as forgotten lumber unless they have the luck to be dragged into the light again by a capitalist individual. Their works will then be seen, in the very sancta of Western bourgeois aestheticism, as part of a particular old-world aesthetic movement which they originated and which flourished in the West long after revolutionary collectivism had rejected it as useless, even for purposes of agitational propaganda. □

FILMS
John Coleman

Adrift

In the White City (15) *Phoenix*
Blow to the Heart *ICA*

By now to call the travelling Alain Tanner a Swiss director is probably pointless, but there was a time when it had relevance. The 'small-town' claustrophobia of Geneva surely led to the ironic impulses behind *Le Retour d'Afrique* (with its flat-bound young couple, embarrassed to show themselves when a projected escape to Algeria falls through). And this revolt against stifling provincialism culminated – on Swiss soil – with the bleak-gleeful cantering round the cantons of a pair of increasingly doomed girls in marvellously free-form *Messidor*, one of the very few road-movies to earn its mileage. Away from his co-writer John Berger, Tanner positively encouraged improvisation here, trusting to his eye and ear for incidental, even accidental moments of windfallen nourishment, tapping the juice in things. This delight in variousness, in changes of pace and place, led him to the moorlands of Western Ireland for his next film (and his first in English), *Light Years Away*, which gave Trevor Howard his head as a cranky old Icarus invited to mouth some unhappily gnomic banalities, animistic pieties that the virtuoso images of landscape had already expressed far more forcefully. Drawn from a novel, this fabular excursion was best when drawn from nature, the stark and magical scenery, haunting hills and skies.

Tanner's, as it were, innocent eye has certainly not deserted him in his latest trip to foreign parts, **In the White City,** which has engine-room Paul (rugged Bruno Ganz) jumping ship in Lisbon. In fact, he has effectively transplanted that eye *in* Paul, whose most cherished possession is a Super-8mm camera which he aims – with part-mad, part-merry randomness – at billowing washing, at arm's length at himself as he walks, at speeding tram-lines, at high facades in the Alfama quarter where he takes a hotel room, at Rosa (Teresa Madruga), the bar-girl-cum-chambermaid with whom he has soon stumbled into a consumingly erotic affair. These grainy moving pictures – a sort of drifter's diary – serve a double function. The short fragments from them cut into the elsewhere technically 'perfect' footage disturb the retina by their naivety, a world seen through alien eyes and not merely those of a fellow suffering a bad, inexplicable case of modish alienation: this, Tanner seems to be urging, is as fresh a vision as you can get. But they are also – and this is how we mostly witness them – packaged off to Paul's bewildered, still-loving wife back in Switzerland, where she runs them through a home projector, a fractured accompaniment to the equally bitty letters Paul sends.

Ironically enough using the same cameraman (Acácio de Almeida) and several of the production staff who had earlier worked on Eduardo de Gregorio's Lisbon-based and updated version of James, *Aspern*, Tanner has – in this 'existential' event – reverted to an even more extreme form of his procedures in *Messidor*, scripting on a day-to-day basis. And, if it is appropriate to talk of an alignment of sympathies, then the growing, meandering movie endorses Paul to a degree and in a way that may not have been fully apprehended. That lower-case *ganz* means 'whole' or 'complete' in German takes on a rueful resonance as Ganz's Paul, now beaming, now bored, mainly a fleshed-out blank, takes his unpremeditated holiday. Typically, he writes: 'I am not on holiday: on holiday you usually do something. You organise your free time. Not me. I do nothing.' In a sense, this is correct. Paul's errancies round the city are aimless; he spends more and more of his time lounging on a bed, drinking heavily, staring at a wash-basin tap, fluttering red curtains. Things are done to him: his wallet is pinched and, tracking one of the thieves later on, he is stabbed enough to hurt. But, for all the dubious wash of angst, he has had a terrific interlude with Rosa: the tenderness and fun, quite apart from the sex, in their encounter had an enviable holiday quality from where I sat.

A short step from there to genuine expostulation about this lost soul's treatment of his wife. 'There is a little chambermaid here with a black diamond between her thighs,' she reads, sinking to her Swiss kitchen floor. To be fair, she subsequently mutters, herself en route to a postbox, 'I didn't ask how long your prick was.' Tanner, though, rather saves the flashes of humour for Paul, right down to the last implication – as he trains homeward – that the stunningly beautiful girl sharing the compartment may offer another detour. If there is an authentic and compelling dreaminess in this identity-crisis in Lisbon (Tanner is ever the mesmerist), the dream has its dampness too.

Gianni Amelio's prized and praised **Blow to the Heart** is the pseudo-profound outcome after RAI-TV's Channel One research into which were the topics most liable to censorship. Abortion and terrorism led; no one would tackle the first; Amelio was chosen to treat the second. Busily, grandiosely and glossily photographed by Tonino Nardi, well acted by a thickening Jean-Louis Trintignant (here playing against the grain of *The Conformist*) and intelligent Pinocchio-faced Fausto Rossi as, respectively, liberal prof father and studious, censorious teenage son, the story deploys a fuzzy thrillerish notion of younger generation spying and ratting on older in the cause of law and order. In the cause of this chic reversal and confrontation, the other characters (typing mama, ex-student terrorist, enigmatic young girl with baby) are minimally rendered. □

TELEVISION
Hugo Williams

Darkeness

TIMES ARE hard when a politician making his secretary pregnant is the best we can do for a scandal. A fascinating Tory specimen called Anthony Beaumont-Darke – the image of one of Guy of Gisborne's men in a Robin Hood film, the one hanging upside down from a tree – turned up on David Frost's **TV-AM** last Saturday with something to say on the subject. Darke said he thought it was important to say from the start that one absolutely should *not* moralise about these things. On the other hand, some people who had admired Mr Parkinson very much had been very saddened to see the lead showing through the golden veneer. He meant delighted, of course. Envy and ambition filled the screen like a fog. 'It wouldn't suit *me*', he went on, 'but it's up to other people how they behave. . . . If I ever got myself into this situation, which pray God I never do, I think it's very damaging . . . I think it would have been far better to have withdrawn . . . for a period.' Well, Parkin-

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son probably wishes he had withdrawn too. But it's easy to be wise after the event.

Mr Darke had hardly finished being outraged by heterosexual profligacy in the House than he had to turn round and be outraged by the other kind. Johnny Apple, of the *NY Times*, suggested that there were even more homosexuals in Parliament than there were in Congress, an incredible enough remark which was nevertheless intended as a kind of compliment, implying that it isn't as easy for them to get that far in America. Darke couldn't grasp this. He thought his honour was being called into question in some way. He protested fit to bust, glancing round for back-bench zoo noises to back him up and finding only Marcia Falkender, all too used to no-commenting, Nigel Dempster, who said he agreed that there were 'many, many, many', and Johnny Apple himself, a statesmanlike figure in this company, who said he would settle for 'many, many'. Darke hung there, upside down, choking on it.

Pebble Mill at One (BBC-1) was the place to be last Thursday if you were a Barry Manilow fan. He was here to do a concert at Blenheim Palace, 'home of the Dukes of Marlborough, historic resting place of the great Sir Winston Churchill, whose fountains and gardens were laid out by Capability Brown'. How did the current Duke feel about this outrage? He felt great. 'I watched tapes and I thought it would attract a more mature class of spectator.' How right he was. Lots of money and no Hell's Angels anywhere. Of the 280 toilets installed for the occasion, 70% were for women. 'What size'? asked a stallholder of a mature woman wanting to buy a Barry T-shirt. 'Medium,' she lied. 'There aren't any left,' he told her. Concessions alone cleared £200,000.

Manilow got his start working in the mail room of CBS, became the manager of a talent show, wrote jingles, and for three years worked as Bette Midler's pianist at the Baths. One night she invited him to sing and 1,500 homosexuals gave him a standing ovation. 'The thing about Barry', said a journalist, 'is that he exploits a market no one else really aims for.' The hack didn't seem to think much of this market, but I think it shows a certain flair on Manilow's part to have turned himself into the very thing which people with no taste have in common. I wondered what Barry himself thought of his fans. 'Intelligent, warm, with good stereos.'

'Good evening and welcome to Blenheim,' said the Duke, sweeping Barry along a matted corridor. 'This is my great-grandfather and this is a painting by an American called Sargent. We have three acres of roof and the building covers 7 acres. Here is the dining room.' 'We eating here tonight?' asked Barry with a trace of determination. 'No', said the Duke firmly, 'we're only 20 tonight.' Barry wanted to say he could fill the extra chairs with acolytes any day, but he only pouted. After dinner, the Duke and his family changed into T-shirts and Barry went away and came back in a helicopter. The curtain went up and there was Blenheim Palace in the background. It turned out to be a backdrop, but it didn't matter. It was time to 'surrender to the Manilow magic'. 'I was Mr Dynamite!' sang Barry improbably. The music stopped and we waited for him to complete a sequence of leering cow-smiles which are apparently the main substance of his music. An intelligent time was had by all.

The lively **Show Business** (BBC-1) brought us the sad news that 'fully-fledged rockstar' David Essex has put together 'two large orchestras and a choir' in order to bring us his 'Mutiny on the Bounty: The Musical'. Is David to play Fletcher Christian? Absolutely. 'Tahiti, the goal of my life,' he sings. 'Receive me home. The flowers, the sky, the sun. Tahiti, Aloha!' 'Fletcher Christian!' sing the girls, 'Love of my life, receive me.' Who will play Bligh, I wonder. I could enjoy seeing Sid Vicious shouting at Essex in public, but Sid's dead, fortunately. How about Rat Scabies? I wouldn't mind playing Bligh myself, if I could have a free hand with the cat, but Essex is probably hoping to get Cliff Richard for the part, 'then, hopefully, take it to Broadway'. In return for Essex as Christian, the Americans are sending us George Segal as Robin Hood and a new kind of salad dressing by Paul Newman.

'Chuck was caesarean', said Dawn French of the excellent comedy duo **French and Saunders** (C4). 'Oh, Gross!' said Jennifer Saunders. 'Do you happen to have it on video? Dirk and I would really dig to come over and share the pain with you sometime.' □

THEATRE
Paul Allen

Doing justice

Measure for Measure
SHAKESPEARE *Stratford*
A Passion in Six Days
HOWARD BARKER *Crucible Theatre, Sheffield*
It Could Be Any One of Us
ALAN AYCKBOURN *Scarborough*

The day we understand every nuance of **Measure for Measure** we shall have no further need of it; we shall be in some form of paradise and shall not need to explore morality any more. In the meantime, Adrian Noble's rich and subtle production makes me surer than ever before that no better play has been written out of the British fascination with sin and punishment.

Shakespeare's central image is the scales from which justice is dispensed. Hence the title; hence the twisting of it which allows Angelo to tell Isabella 'My force outweighs your truth' when she threatens to tell the world that he has offered to trade her virginity for her brother's life. But Noble has taken as a second major metaphor that of clothes. Angelo, put in charge of Vienna while the Duke has a kind of sabbatical, is dressed in 'a little brief authority'.

But the Duke, putting on a Friar's habi to slink unknown through the city, is likewise dressed in a little brief applied theology. The production, set in a heavily baroque world of dark corners and patches of blinding light, opens with the donning of the robes of office in front of a mirror; another image picked up when he 'returns' to the Vienna he never left. In between he is apparently forever on the point of being recognised – his cover blown.

And how much more complex he is than Angelo, who makes the relatively simple discovery that while unbridled lust may be a bad thing, bridled lust can be even more destructive. It's the Duke, after all, who has let things slide and now wants somebody else to do the dirty work of cleaning up; who loves his people but can't bear to walk among them; who forces Isabella to suffer the false belief that her brother is dead; whose own proposal to Isabella carries in this production a sanctimonious echo of Angelo's proposition.

Shakespeare's motive is made as clear as his characters are devious. Isabella has to believe the worst of Angelo, that he had broken his word and had her brother executed, before she can forgive the worst. Then and only then she breaks the circle of eye-for-an-eye justice and the moral totalitarianism of those who convince themselves that they always know they are right.

Daniel Massey, as the Duke, takes a solo bow at the end of the show. He is worth the applause, but I got the feeling Noble was trying to make sure we had not missed the point, and the curtain call is a bit late for that. It is a fine ensemble production. David Schofield (Angelo) is wrestling with Shakespeare in a way that is developing excitingly. Richard O'Callaghan makes a wonderful Lucio and the stunner of the evening is Juliet Stevenson's Isabella, caught between school and nunnery: her first and unintended venture into the light outside sees her actually ask Angelo how she can bribe him, and then being amazed at the answer. Don't anybody tell me that's a simple misunderstanding.

Sex, whichever side of the sheets, is as rampant in the Labour Party as anywhere else, according to **A Passion in Six Days**; and that word in the title reminds us how, in the age of the new puritanism, politics can take over the language of religion, ideology or theology. But who is Howard Barker's Christ-figure? Or, if that is too crude a question, where are the characters or the narrative force to command the audience's involvement?

Perhaps it is Barker's misfortune to have written about the Labour Party Conference as a series of painful individual but related predicaments in the one year that the real thing actually had a proper plot. His characters, in Michael Boyd's austere but leisurely production, all suffer except perhaps the sharp Welsh heir-apparent (David Hargreaves on good form). All are sort of identifiable, which is to say you are distracted enough by wigs and accents to wonder if the author is really meaning us to see Michael Foot, Eric Heffer and the rest out there.

The lack of focus is not helped by the

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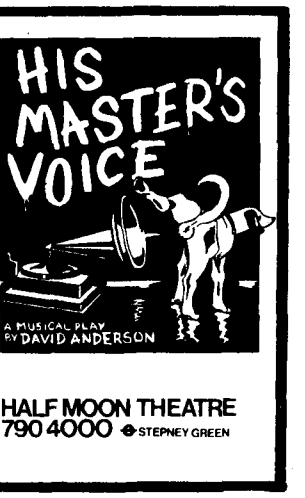

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repetitive *a cappella* music of Mr Sprat's *20th Century Motets*, which brings everything to a regular halt, and the bits of very good play that are knocking about inside this long and unwieldy piece suffer accordingly: these are the dreadful crisis of a young militant (Peter Wight), proposing a resolution calling for sexual freedom while recognising that it means his own wife's right to sleep with whomever she fancies, the dithering of an old right-winger (Harold Innocent) and one moment of stilling power when Sebastian Shaw's nonagenarian pacifist makes as fine an anti-bomb speech as I have heard in the theatre. There are some good jokes, some searchingly poetic imagery and enough 'language' and nudity to send the citizens of Britain's most indefatigably socialist region clucking off into the night.

Alan Ayckbourn's 30th play for Scarborough is a comedy-thriller. **It Could Be Any One of Us** has a typical piece of extra ingenuity in that the title is literally true and the villain can be different every night. The play comes complete with country house, a family of eccentric artists (like failed Sitwells, rather) a storm outside and an outsider claiming the inheritance. It's performed, as ever, with the intimate confidence that Ayckbourn gets out of his regulars in his own theatre; it is comic and it is thrilling and it makes theatre-going a treat, even as you notice that the men are all barmy and the women unhappy and that the author has discreetly reminded you yet again to beware of people who know exactly what is best for us all. Shakespeare would have drunk a Measure to that. □

FIRST PERSON

Anna Coote

A hidden piece

A BOOK I have just read carries on its back a curious blurb. Unusually for the paperback trade, so fond of hyperbole, Penguin (who published this edition in 1977) seem anxious only to reassure me that the book is not as bad as I might expect. They tell me that I would be wrong to consider the author 'too wrapped up in her art' or too 'set' in her ways to observe what went on around her; they protest that it is 'far from being a rarified treatise . . . on "literature".'

Why are they so defensive? The author is internationally acclaimed as one of the great writers of the century, and this work was executed at the height of her powers. I know I am not alone in judging it brilliant: forcefully argued and beautifully written. In some circles, I would almost feel ashamed to admit that I haven't read it before . . . but here is a clue to the tone of the publisher's blurb. It was only quite recently that the book was recommended to me. Before that, I suspected it wasn't worth reading. I can't remember who first put the idea into my head – an English teacher at school, perhaps, or a fellow student or a literary critic long ago – but I spent some time believing that *Three Guineas* was one of Virginia Woolf's least impressive efforts.

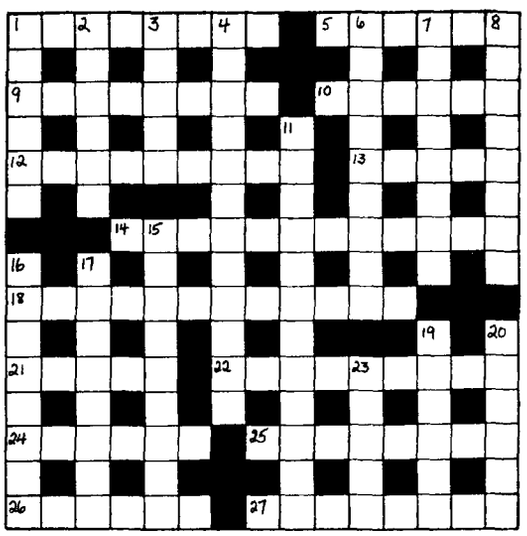
This was the book that Leonard Woolf decreed was 'not very good', that John Maynard Keynes described as a 'silly argument and not very well written', and that Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf's biographer, condemned as 'tenuous' and 'wholly inadequate'.* *Three Guineas*, first published in 1938, was shunned by the literary and political establishment, and had to wait nearly four decades to be reclaimed by the women's movement.

It is significant that Penguin didn't see fit to publish it until 1977, and then only in the regular orange edition. Why did it fare worse than *A Room of One's Own*, published earlier and in the dignified grey of Penguin Modern Classics? These are Virginia Woolf's two major works of feminist non-fiction: both present a subversive critique of patriarchy.

Perhaps it is because Woolf argues with such subtlety, aware of the risk she is taking. ('We must still hide what we are doing and thinking', she says in *Three Guineas*; it is dangerous 'to criticise your master . . . those who are economically dependent have strong reasons for fear.') On the surface, *A Room of One's Own* can be seen as a book about women and literature – relatively safe subjects for a female writer to tackle. *Three Guineas*, though no less subtly argued, is unmistakeably about men and war. It is an

Weekend Crossword 1417

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1417, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 25 October.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

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ACROSS

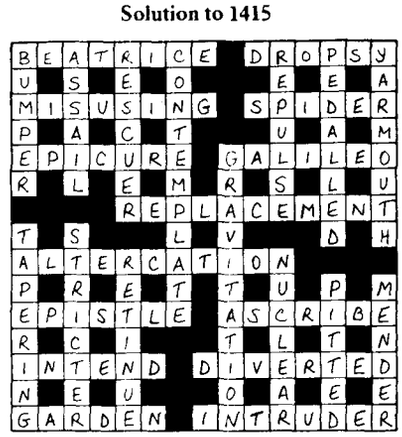
1. Novelist and composer found in Cheshire (8)
5. Exchanges about a thousand for unproductive land (6)
9. Retired before the dynasty was showing signs of sickness (8)
10. Birkenhead country (6)
12. Soldier but one who meets his end on a ship? (9)
13. Birds who are in the competition to feather nests (5)
14. For fresh thought I go mixing with real India (8,4)
18. If gold were lost, this city would have to wither away on the branch (12)
21. Girl who is less than ordinary (5)
22. For the moment it supplies me with a helper (9)
24. I stir one concoction for eye trouble (6)
25. There is small reward in an honourable type of music (8)
26. Shed or refuse heartlessly (6)
27. Highly regarded seed scattered and about to be prolific (8)

DOWN

1. Cleans up jail (6)
2. Rhyming fool (6)
3. Man swallowed by animal as a drink (5)
4. Naval vantage point for studying the drawer? (12)
6. Part of eye with iris shows sign of submission (5,4)
7. A liquor concocted without an admixture of rain (8)
8. Miller's died (8)
11. A Spaniard tries to talk with people who speak a different language (12)
15. Making a fresh study concerning a town (9)
16. Punishment with a nine-inch ruler (8)
17. Less calm but involving more stir (8)
19. If the evangelist lost a little weight he would still be a bad actor (6)
20. Mountain-climbing man is smooth (6)
23. Has large ears and holds one in bewilderment (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1415



Prizewinners to 1415

Miss K. Addison (Helmsdale, Sutherland)
Ms Tracey Jacques (London SE26)
Murray McCartney (Botswana)

See p 33 for solution and prizewinners to Crossword 1416

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offence for women to write critically or disrespectfully about men. The more stringent the criticism, the deeper the disrespect, the heavier the sentence will be. A suitable punishment for a political writer is to ignore or disparage her work.

I haven't space here to tell you what *Three Guineas* is about. If you haven't read it yet, rush out and get it. If it isn't in the library or bookshop, order it. In the meantime, the briefest summary will have to do. Virginia Woolf addresses the question of how women can avert war. She concludes that if they are to stop the proliferation of 'dead bodies and ruined houses' which are the undisputed facts of war, they must have economic autonomy in order to assert their influence independently of men. They must also reject masculine values, traditions and forms (competitiveness, hierarchy, accumulation, self-aggrandisement, patriotism) and reshape society. Here, for example, is the passage where she considers how men's lives could be transformed and humanised if they stopped assuming the main responsibility for breadwinning for their families:

> No longer would you need to go to the office at nine-thirty and stay there till six . . . You could see the fruit trees flower in spring. You could share the prime of life with your children. And after that prime was over, no longer need you be thrown from the machine on to the scrap heap without any life left or interest . . . No longer would you be . . . the deflated work slave calling for replenishment; or, as Herr Hitler puts it, the hero requiring recreation . . .

It is at once heartening and chilling to discover how closely her ideas match those of feminists today. Heartening, of course, to find another piece in the scattered jigsaw of women's political history; chilling to sense how well the pieces have been hidden. We must keep reinventing our politics, because we cannot build upon the insights of women before us.

And the process continues. Consider how many prominent 'thinking' men on the Left write and talk as though they have not noticed what women are saying. You can scour the pages of all the major political journals, going back over as many years as you like. You can read all the speeches that politicians have made. You will find no more than one or two instances where men have taken up with any seriousness the critique of patriarchy that Virginia Woolf put forward in *Three Guineas*, and that feminists have been reinventing and developing ever since.

This is a manifestation of what I would call the strategy of 'passive resistance', employed by men to deter progress towards female liberation. They don't have to shoot anyone in this kind of battle. They just have to sit tight and do nothing, secure in the knowledge that their superior force is well enough established to maintain the status quo and, with it, their advantage. □

★*See* Women of Ideas *by Dale Spender, Routledge, 1982.*

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 2792 **Set by F. R. Spofforth**

Later this month those peerless publishers, Messrs Allen Lane, will be issuing E. O. Parrott's *Penguin Book of Limericks*. While compiling the book, E. O. had great difficulty finding any limericks which encapsulated the plots of films, operas, ballets or TV programmes. Fill this gap, please, by 28 October. Thanks to the bounteous generosity of the aforesaid peerless publishers, hardback copies of the great book will be awarded for the best entries.

No 2789 **Set by P. W. R. Foot**

Verses in rhyming slang about current celebrities.

Report **By Jeff Squiffy**

Not an easy one, this. All the more credit, then, to those hardy few who applied themselves to the task. Twelve of the best to J. Barrow for topicality and general excellence; nine quid apiece to the rest.

Tho' his serve went over the ginger wine
To a cry of 'Brussels Sprout!'
He suggested the umpire was coughing and choking,
Gave his racket a bottle of stout.

But the umpire fined him a Sunday joint
In the vital fifth cigarette,
So he threw his ball at the shouting loud;
Kicked a hole in the Police Gazette;

Told the linesman 'You're the hominy grits,
And you need some Aldwych Farces,'
But the crowd agreed that spoilt Jack Sprats
Need a kick up their Khyber Passes. KEN RUDGE

The new Labour leader
Though not Brahms and Liszt
Got wet round the houses,
His pegs in a twist.

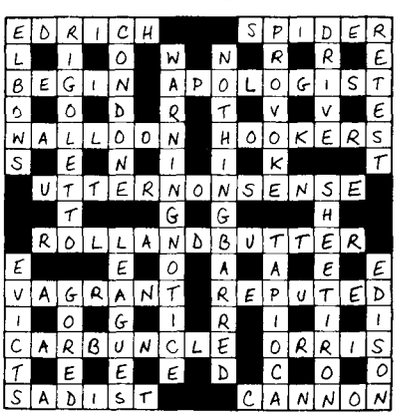
His trouble and strife
Got him up on his plates
While his north and south moved
On life's two and eights.

Though lots had a butcher's
None managed to hear
A dicky, for it bounced
Off their bottles of beer. KATE MALLETT

He was such an 'andsome brute
With his natty whistle 'n' flute
Which he Baron's Court in Savile Come and go,
In the pow'r 'n' glory Chair
With his smootho Barnet Fair
Just the flea and itcher of an 'igh-class beau.

But he liked a Friar Tuck
On the side (a cattle truck
Call it what you will, he liked it, bet your life);
And the colonel's Guinness porter
Got in red hot miller's daughter.
Him? He scarper floed back to his trouble 'n' strife. JEDEDIAH BARROW

Solution to 1416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ART SCHOOL TEACHER, 50s, would like to resign his long held bachelorhood, to friendly female interested in lively domesticity, and perhaps the creation of an infant. London lover essential. Box 6736.

ARTS ORIENTATED, tall and attractive professional man, 44, seeks warm, cultured, shapely, feminine companion, 30-40, initially for friendship but hopefully leading to deeper relationship. Box 6679.

ASIAN MALE, 39, slim, educated, broad-minded, wishes to meet fun-loving lady/couple, age, nationality unimportant. South London. Box 6755.

A SUCCESSFUL, *socialist* freelance commercial artist, 40s, would like clandestine daytime meetings, for conversation with an interesting and controversial woman. Discretion assured. Box 6696.

ATTRACTIVE MAN, Lecturer, seeks attractive, *intelligent woman (young to approx. 50), for* warm friendship and enjoyment, any race or personal circumstance. Box 6656.

ATTRACTIVE N. LONDON woman, successful in job where intellect counts, combines cultural interests with home-making skills, seeks non-married man, 34-42, possibly children. Box 6730.

ATTRACTIVE DIVORCEE, 41, *family fleeing* nest, likes cooking, countryside, DIY, music, seeks kind, intelligent, professional gent, who *also needs caring person, for lasting* relationship. Box 6711.

ATTRACTIVE, UNATTACHED, educated, Indian lady, 40s, would like to meet professional, educated English male, 45 and over. Box 6710.

ATTRACTIVE LADY, personable, cultured, exec., div., young **44,** London based. Enjoys city and country/social and home life. Warm, *lively-minded with wide interests.* Seeks sincere, solvent, sensitive, considerate, charismatic, enlightened, professional man (mature *graduate*), 45-late 50s, *for rapport/meaningful,* permanent, loving relationship. Only genuine replies. Phone no./photo apprec. Box 6737.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, forties, professional background, wishes to meet professional man, similar age. Permanent relationship, Bristol area. Box 6707.

ATTRACTIVE AND ACADEMIC/professional *woman, 30s, PhD, author, musical, country* home; seeks university lecturer (Oxbridge/London) or professional man (law, medicine), 35-50, *slightly bookish, fond of Harris tweeds,* fireside conversation, countryside rambles and Schubert. Box 6750.

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ENGLISHMAN, 35, smoker, unhappily married, seeks female perhaps in similar situation, for caring relationship, mutual support, even possible escape. Age, race, looks immaterial. London. Box 6690.

EXCEPTIONALLY TALL, financial consultant, 38, affectionate, secure, unhappily married, needs understanding girl, for warmth and solace. Marital status unimportant. Phone no. Sm. photo appreciated. London. Box 6666.

FEMALE GRADUATE, Czech, likes reading, cinema, walking, travel, seeks intelligent, kind man, 30-38, for lasting relationship. London area. Small photo appreciated. Box 6702.

GENTLE FRENCHMAN, tourist guide, early 40s, 'cuddly', balding, seeks lady friend for occasional days and evenings free in London/Surrey/Hants/Bucks area. Box 6756.

GOOD LISTENER! *Down to earth single man,* 33, solid, sensitive and intelligent, with sense of humour, seeks outgoing, independent lady, *with ideas.* Box 6748.

HAPPY, INTELLIGENT, almost beautiful woman, whose only problem is *all the men* she meets are married, would like to meet an interesting, attractive one who isn't, 35-45, Herts/Cambs. Box 6703.

LADY (living Notts, Derbys border), intellectual, attractive, artistic, seeks refined gentle*man, schoolmaster/professional/businessman* (possibly millionaire!), late 50s/60s, happy, permanent relationship. Box 6727.

LEFT-WING male, London, 59, divorced, 5ft 6in, non-smoker, no religion, seeks female 45-59, permanent relationship. Interests: politics, philosophy, science, music, theatre, chess. Box 6675.

LOVE LIFE and death. Male writer, finding the combination compelling, not morbid, would explore all three with charismatic, attractive and educated lady, accessible Oxfordshire. Box 6699.

MALE TEACHER, 33, interested in literature and travel, would like to meet Russian or Russian speaking lady, for conversation and friendship. Box 6704.

MAN, 43, *5ft 8in, PhD., needs relationship with* attractive woman, not too slim, with left-wing views. Likes music, piano, rambling, cats, peace and quiet. Box 6681.

MERSEYSIDE: PRESENTABLE, fit 60s professional, failed marriage, seeks permanent friendship, attractive, humorous lady, under 55, interested arts, outdoors, travel, usual indoor pleasures. Photo appreciated. Box 6740.

MERSEYSIDE/CHESHIRE area, single man, 35, quiet but adventurous, enjoys walking, travel, theatre, opera, seeks female companion for friendship and outings, possibly more. Box 6682.

MIDDLE EASTERN gentleman, university lecturer in his mid forties, in England for research, requires the company of an English lady, 35-50, *to help him improve his English,* and share his company for outings etc. Socialist preferred. Leeds/Bradford/Huddersfield area. Box 6597.

MIDDLE-AGED amateur musician, male, many other interests, abilities, would like ideally to meet lady violinist, who likes playing chamber music and making love. Box 6739.

MUSIC LOVING Company Director, London, good looking, presentable, affluent, would love a woman's company for theatre, concerts, dinners, non-political, 40-55. Home Counties. Box 6726.

NORTHERN, PROFESSIONAL woman, personable, independent, equable, requires affectionate friendship with man, 45-55, status immaterial, preferably tallish, non-smoker, easy-going, solvent, reliable, resourceful. Box 6691.

NO SEX please. West Yorks woman, 29, happily mad with married lover, dreads inevitable 'couples' occasions. Prof. male friendship/escort duty? Small photo appreciated/returned. Box 6672.

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OPTIMISTIC SOCIALIST, affectionate male publisher, 45, seeks self-confident, intelligent woman for love, laughter, passion, politics and more maybe – Asian, African or European ladies please write. Box 6697.

OVERWEIGHT MALE, *non graduate, non vegetarian,* smoker, unemployed, 37, own home. Would like to meet female, any age, above *qualities acceptable, but not necessary.* Box 6692.

PREMATURELY RETIRED academic and author, 52, single, Manchester, seeks lady companion to share interests and tastes. French culture, music, cooking, dancing. Box 6693.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, slim, good-looking, seeks lively, kind, woman friend, early forties. Box 6673.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, young 52, widow, *happy in work and home,* needs companionship of man in similar position, with sense of humour, for shared dinners, outings, possibly holidays. Metropolitan Essex. Interests: people, travel, food. Box 6683.

PROF. MAN, mature to late 50s, genuine personable, solvent – *needing 'special lady', for* lasting warmth, companionship, fun. Attractive, vivacious, sensuous, cultured divorcee, 45, *'welcomes' contact.* Box 6747.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, 32, interests music, travel, *current affairs, seeks girl friend.* I am Indian, but any nationality or colour. Children no objection. London/anywhere. Box 6665.

SHY, SEXY, fair, slim, artistic, thoughtful male, 26, wants female partner. Share each other, travel maybe. W. Midlands preferred, not essential. Exchange letter, small photo. Box 6735.

SOLO MAN, 37, seeks a woman of wit and warmth, to share London's theatre, film, music etc, the great outdoors, and for mutual support. Box 6674.

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SUSSEX: East Grinstead w dow, 50s, 5ft 10in, interested in art, gardening, countryside, most music, seeks genuine professional widower, *for companionship. Box 6701.*

TALL, ATTRACTIVE woman, mixed race, graduate, many interests, seeks thinking, warm, aware man, 30-45, for serious, caring relationship. London/SE. Small photo please. Box 6695.

TALL, DARK female, 24, North Surrey, cat lover, gardener, country walker, dancing, *seeks 35ish, kind, sensible cheerful,* interesting, unattached male, small photo appreciated. Box 6733.

TALL, SLIM, intelligent woman, divorced, living North England, would love to meet masculine, caring man, 40-60, who also needs warmth, open-mindedness and fun. Box 6709.

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HISTORY WORKSHOP CENTRE FOR SOCIAL HISTORY is offering a two year **Research Fellowship**, at Ruskin College, Oxford. This is a part-time post, which is quasi-instrumental and quasi-expressive, in so far as it requires the skills of both prudence and invention. Its general purpose is to initiate and organise discussion groups and workshops under the auspices of the Centre. An interest in, and ability to collaborate with, school-teachers and local historians is essential. Salary is straitened, but destined to multiply with the Centre. Applications to Susan Bullock, Ruskin College, Oxford OX1 2HE. Closing date November 1st.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO (law) student in danger of having to terminate studies for financial reasons seeks help via financial contributions/-loan or free accom. in friendly home near Waltham Forest College. Childminding eves, gardening, house maintenance offered in exchange. Box 6731.

GROUPS/MEETINGS

CENTRAL LONDON FABIAN SOCIETY. Wednesday 19 October, 8 p.m. Cole Room, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1. Rt Hon. Peter Archer, QC, MP, on 'Labour After the Conference'. All welcome.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme of activities. Public talk Sunday 16 Oct. 8 p.m. 'The Science of Magic'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, aged 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, communications, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and Intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-452 8358.

EVENTS AND COURSES at Lower Shaw: 28-30 Oct: Walking weekend. 18-20 Nov: Peace in conflict? 2-4 Dec: Drama weekend. 30 Dec-2 Jan: New Year Celebration. Wholefoods, low cost, informal. SAE to Lower Shaw Farm, Shaw, Swindon, Wilts. Tel. 0793 771080.

German Historical Institute, London
Public Lecture jointly with the Prince Albert Society Coburg
Tuesday, 18 Oct.
Robert Rhodes James, MP
'Prince Albert and Germany'
17 Bloomsbury Square
***London* WC1A 2LP**
01-404 5486
Tea from 4.30 p.m.
Seminar starts at 5p.m.
Reception afterwards

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (Gower St, WC1E 6BT). The Freud Memorial Lectures in Psychoanalysis by Professor Albert J. Solnit, 'Memory as Preparation: Developmental & Psychoanalytic Perspectives', Mon. 24 Oct. at 5.30 in the Chemistry Auditorium, Christopher Ingold Laboratories, Gordon St, WC1. Adm. free, without ticket. (Further lectures in this series 30 Jan., 20 Feb., 12 March 1984.)

WAR ON WANT
CONVENTION '83
VOICES FOR CHANGE

With five Third World speakers
Saturday October 22
at Sheffield Town Hall

Information from: Pat, War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road London N7 9BE

The Churches' Council for Health and Healing

HOLISTIC OPPORTUNITIES IN MEDICINE

An open lecture by
DR PETER NIXON
(Charing Cross Hospital, London)

A conventional cardiologist and a founder-member of the International Society for Humanism in Cardiology.

The Lecture will take place at **5.30 p.m.** on **Tuesday, 18 October,** at **St Marylebone Parish Church, Marylebone Road, NW1** (almost opposite Madame Tussauds; nearest tube – Baker Street).

All are Welcome **Collection**

HOLIDAYS/TRAVEL

JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA. Low cost flights, holiday journeys. 3-6 weeks. JLA, 10 Barleymow Passage, London W4. 01-747 3108.

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23 December-5 January, 1984
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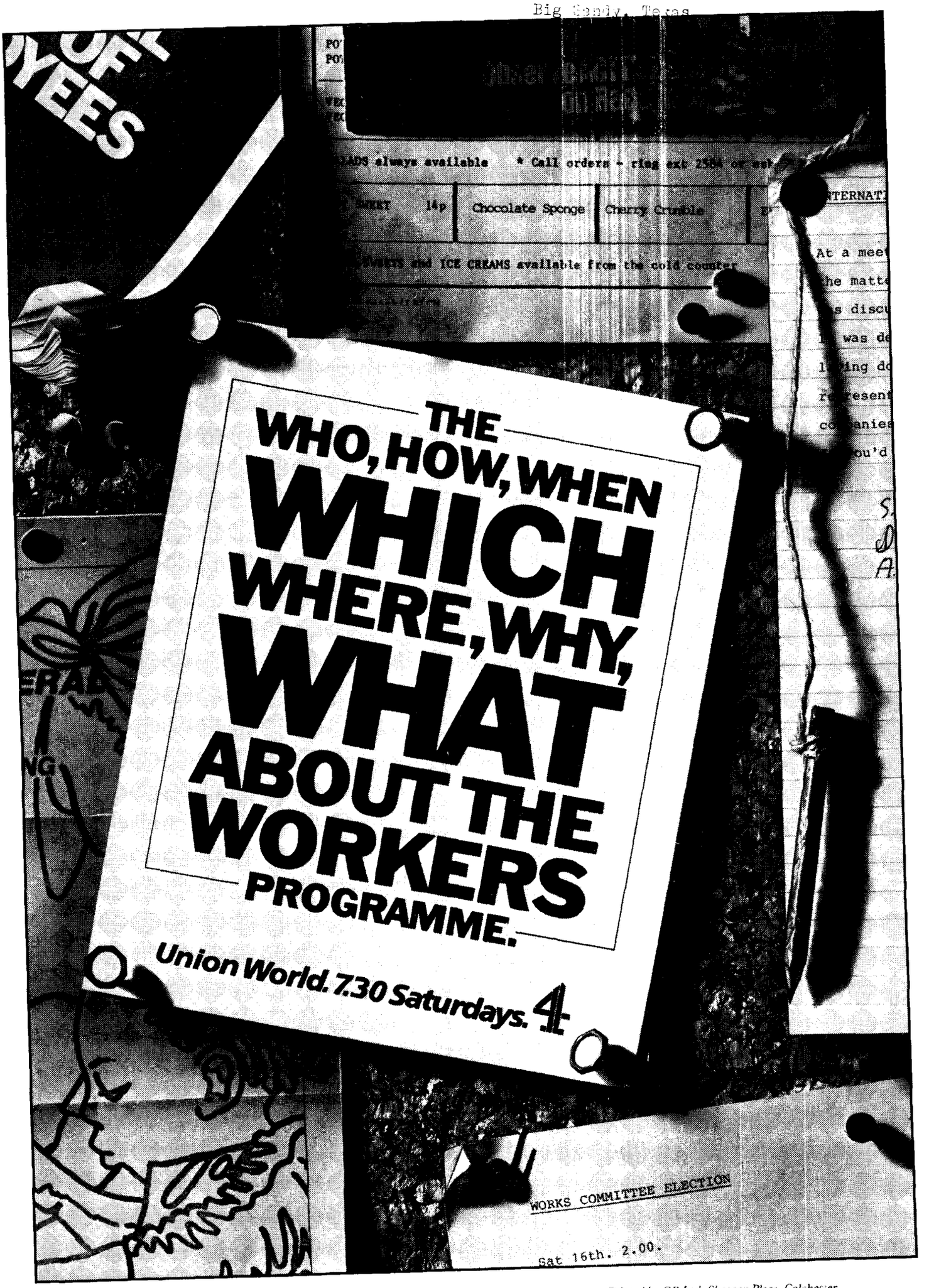

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